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SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME TWO

WITH LIFE OF THE AUTHOR
By MATHILDE BLIND

ILLUSTRATED

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CHAPTER VI.

Most people must have agreed with Mrs. Raynor that the Confirmation that day was a pretty sight, at least when those slight girlish forms and fair young faces moved in a white rivulet along the aisles, and flowed into kneeling semicircles under the light of the great chancel window, softened by patches of dark old painted glass; and one would think that to look on while a pair of venerable hands pressed such young heads, and a venerable face looked upward for a blessing on them, would be very likely to make the heart swell gently, and to moisten the eyes. Yet I remember the eyes seemed very dry in Milby Church that day, notwithstanding that the Bishop was an old man, and probably venerable (for though he was not an eminent Grecian, he was the brother of a Whig lord); and I think the eyes must have remained dry, because he had small delicate womanish hands adorned with ruffles, and, instead of laying them on the girls' heads, just let them hover over each in quick succession, as if it were not etiquette to touch them, and as if the laying on of hands were like the theatrical embrace—part of the play, and not to be really believed in. To be sure, there were a great many heads, and the Bishop's time was limited. Moreover, a wig can, under no circumstances, be affecting, except in rare cases of illusion; and copious lawn-sleeves cannot be expected to go directly to any heart except a washerwoman's.

I know, Ned Phipps, who knelt against me, and I am sure made me behave much worse than I should have done without him, whispered that he thought the Bishop was a "guy," and I certainly remember thinking that Mr. Prendergast looked much more dignified with his plain white surplice and black hair. He was a tall commanding man, and read the Liturgy in a strikingly sonorous and uniform voice, which I tried to imitate the next Sunday at home, until my little sister began to cry, and said I was "yoaring at her."

Mr. Tryan sat in a pew near the pulpit with several other clergymen. He looked pale, and rubbed his hand over his

face and pushed back his hair oftener than usual. Standing in the aisle close to him, and repeating the responses with edifying loudness, was Mr. Budd, churchwarden and delegate, with a white staff in his hand and a backward bend of his small head and person, such as, I suppose, he considered suitable to a friend of sound religion. Conspicuous in the gallery, too, was the tall figure of Mr. Dempster, whose professional avocations rarely allowed him to occupy his place at church.

"There's Dempster," said Mrs. Linnet to her daughter Mary, "looking more respectable than usual, I declare. He's got a fine speech by heart to make to the Bishop, I'll answer for it. But he'll be pretty well sprinkled with snuff before service is over, and the Bishop won't be able to listen to him for sneezing, that's one comfort."

At length the last stage in the long ceremony was over, the large assembly streamed warm and weary into the open afternoon sunshine, and the Bishop retired to the Parsonage, where, after honoring Mrs. Crewe's collation, he was to give audience to the delegates and Mr. Tryan on the great question of the evening lecture.

Between five and six o'clock the Parsonage was once more as quiet as usual under the shadow of its tall elms, and the only traces of the Bishop's recent presence there were the wheel-marks on the gravel, and the long table with its garnished dishes awry, its damask sprinkled with crumbs, and its decanters without their stoppers. Mr. Crewe was already calmly smoking his pipe in the opposite sitting-room, and Janet was agreeing with Mrs. Crewe that some of the blancmange would be a nice thing to take to Sally Martin, while the little old lady herself had a spoon in her hand ready to gather the crumbs into a plate, that she might scatter them on the gravel for the little birds.

Before that time, the Bishop's carriage had been seen driving through the High Street on its way to Lord Trufford's, where he was to dine. The question of the lecture was decided, then?

The nature of the decision may be gathered from the following conversation which took place in the bar of the Red Lion that evening.

"So you're done, eh, Dempster?" was Mr. Pilgrim's observation, uttered with some gusto. He was not glad Mr. Tryan had gained his point, but he was not sorry Dempster was disappointed.

"Done, sir? Not at all. It is what I anticipated. I knew we had nothing else to expect in these days, when the Church is infested by a set of men who are only fit to give out hymns from an empty cask, to tunes set by a journeyman cobbler. But I was not the less to exert myself in the cause of sound Churchmanship for the good of the town. Any coward can fight a battle when he's sure of winning; but give me the man who has pluck to fight when he's sure of losing. That's my way, sir; and there are many victories worse than a defeat, as Mr. Tryan shall learn to his cost."

"He must be a poor shuperannyated sort of a bishop, that's my opinion," said Mr. Tomlinson, "to go along with a sneaking Methodist like Tryan. And, for my part, I think we should be as well wi'out bishops, if they're no wiser than that. Where's the use o' havin' thousands a year an' livin' in a pallis, if they don't stick to the Church?"

"No. There you're going out of your depth, Tomlinson," said Mr. Dempster. "No one shall hear me say a word against Episcopacy—it is a safeguard of the Church; we must have ranks and dignities there as well as everywhere else. No, sir! Episcopacy is a good thing; but it may happen that a bishop is not a good thing. Just as brandy is a good thing, though this particular brandy is British, and tastes like sugared rain-water caught down the chimney. Here, Ratcliffe, let me have something to drink, a little less like a decoction of sugar and soot."

"*I* said nothing again' Episcopacy," returned Mr. Tomlinson. "I only said I thought we should do as well wi'out bishops; an' I'll say it again for the matter o' that. Bishops never brought any grist to my mill."

"Do you know when the lectures are to begin?" said Mr. Pilgrim.

"They are to *begin* on Sunday next," said Mr. Dempster, in a significant tone; "but I think it will not take a long-

sighted prophet to foresee the end of them. It strikes me Mr. Tryan will be looking out for another curacy shortly."

"He'll not get many Milby people to go and hear his lectures after a while, I'll bet a guinea," observed Mr. Budd. "I know I'll not keep a single workman on my ground who either goes to the lecture himself or lets anybody belonging to him go."

"Nor me naythe r," said Mr. Tomlinson. "No Tryanite shall touch a sack or drive a wagon o' mine, that you may depend on. An' I know more besides me as are o' the same mind."

"Tryan has a good many friends in the town, though, and friends that are likely to stand by him too," said Mr. Pilgrim. "I should say it would be as well to let him and his lectures alone. If he goes on preaching as he does, with such a constitution as his, he'll get a relaxed throat by and by, and you'll be rid of him without any trouble."

"We'll not allow him to do himself that injury," said Mr. Dempster. "Since his health is not good, we'll persuade him to try change of air. Depend upon it, he'll find the climate of Milby too hot for him."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Dempster did not stay long at the Red Lion that evening. He was summoned home to meet Mr. Armstrong, a wealthy client, and as he was kept in consultation till a late hour, it happened that this was one of the nights on which Mr. Dempster went to bed tolerably sober. Thus the day, which had been one of Janet's happiest, because it had been spent by her in helping her dear old friend Mrs. Crewe, ended for her with unusual quietude; and as a bright sunset promises a fair morning, so a calm lying down is a good augury for a calm waking. Mr. Dempster, on the Thursday morning, was in one of his best humors, and though perhaps some of the good-humor might result from the prospect of a lucrative and exciting bit of business in Mr. Armstrong's probable lawsuit, the greater part of it was doubtless due to those stirrings

of the more kindly, healthy sap of human feeling, by which goodness tries to get the upper hand in us whenever it seems to have the slightest chance—on Sunday mornings, perhaps, when we are set free from the grinding hurry of the week, and take the little three-year-old on our knee at breakfast to share our egg and muffin; in moments of trouble, when death visits our roof or illness makes us dependent on the tending hand of a slighted wife; in quiet talks with an aged mother, of the days when we stood at her knee with our first picture-book, or wrote her loving letters from school. In the man whose childhood has known caresses there is always a fibre of memory that can be touched to gentle issues, and Mr. Dempster, whom you have hitherto seen only as the orator of the Red Lion, and the drunken tyrant of a dreary midnight home, was the first-born darling son of a fair little mother. That mother was living still, and her own large black easy-chair, where she sat knitting through the livelong day, was now set ready for her at the breakfast-table, by her son's side, a sleek tortoise-shell cat acting as provisional incumbent.

"Good-morning, Mamsey! why, you're looking as fresh as a daisy this morning. You're getting young again," said Mr. Dempster, looking up from his newspaper when the little old lady entered. A very little old lady she was, with a pale, scarcely wrinkled face, hair of that peculiar white which tells that the locks have once been blond, a natty pure white cap on her head, and a white shawl pinned over her shoulders. You saw at a glance that she had been a mignonne blonde, strangely unlike her tall, ugly, dingy-complexioned son; unlike her daughter-in-law, too, whose large-featured brunette beauty seemed always thrown into higher relief by the white presence of little Mamsey. The unlikeness between Janet and her mother-in-law went deeper than outline and complexion, and indeed there was little sympathy between them, for old Mrs. Dempster had not yet learned to believe that her son, Robert, would have gone wrong if he had married the right woman—a meek woman like herself, who would have borne him children, and been a deft, orderly housekeeper. In spite of Janet's tenderness and attention to her, she had had little love for her daughter-in-law from the first, and had witnessed

the sad growth of home-misery through long years, always with a disposition to lay the blame on the wife rather than on the husband, and to reproach Mrs. Raynor for encouraging her daughter's faults by a too exclusive sympathy. But old Mrs. Dempster had that rare gift of silence and passivity which often supplies the absence of mental strength; and, whatever were her thoughts, she said no word to aggravate the domestic discord. Patient and mute she sat at her knitting through many a scene of quarrel and anguish; resolutely she appeared unconscious of the sounds that reached her ears, and the facts she divined after she had retired to her bed; mutely she witnessed poor Janet's faults, only registering them as a balance of excuse on the side of her son. The hard, astute, domineering attorney was still that little old woman's pet, as he had been when she watched with triumphant pride his first tumbling effort to march alone across the nursery floor. "See what a good son he is to me!" she often thought. "Never gave me a harsh word. And so he might have been a good husband."

Oh, it is piteous—that sorrow of aged women! In early youth, perhaps, they said to themselves, "I shall be happy when I have a husband to love me best of all"; then, when the husband was too careless, "My child will comfort me"; then, through the mother's watching and toil, "My child will repay me all when it grows up." And at last, after the long journey of years has been wearily travelled through, the mother's heart is weighed down by a heavier burthen, and no hope remains but the grave.

But this morning old Mrs. Dempster sat down in her easy-chair without any painful, suppressed remembrance of the preceding night.

"I declare mammy looks younger than Mrs. Crewe, who is only sixty-five," said Janet. "Mrs. Crewe will come to see you to-day, mammy, and tell you all about her troubles with the Bishop and the collation. She'll bring her knitting, and you'll have a regular gossip together."

"The gossip will be all on one side, then, for Mrs. Crewe gets so very deaf, I can't make her hear a word. And if I motion to her, she always understands me wrong."

"Oh, she will have so much to tell you to-day, you will not want to speak yourself. You who have patience to knit those wonderful counterpanes, mammy, must not be impatient with dear Mrs. Crewe. Good old lady! I can't bear her to think she's ever tiresome to people, and you know she's very ready to fancy herself in the way. I think she would like to shrink up to the size of a mouse, that she might run about and do people good without their noticing her."

"It isn't patience I want, God knows; it's lungs to speak loud enough. But you'll be at home yourself, I suppose, this morning; and you can talk to her for me."

"No, mammy; I promised poor Mrs. Lowme to go and sit with her. She's confined to her room, and both the Miss Lowmes are out; so I'm going to read the newspaper to her and amuse her."

"Couldn't you go another morning? As Mr. Armstrong and that other gentleman are coming to dinner, I should think it would be better to stay at home. Can you trust Betty to see to everything? She's new to the place."

"Oh, I couldn't disappoint Mrs. Lowme; I promised her. Betty will do very well, no fear."

Old Mrs. Dempster was silent after this, and began to sip her tea. The breakfast went on without further conversation for some time, Mr. Dempster being absorbed in the papers. At length, when he was running over the advertisements, his eye seemed to be caught by something that suggested a new thought to him. He presently thumped the table with an air of exultation, and said, turning to Janet—

"I've a capital idea, Gypsy!" (that was his name for his dark-eyed wife when he was in an extraordinarily good humor), "and you shall help me. It's just what you're up to."

"What is it?" said Janet, her face beaming at the sound of the pet name, now heard so seldom. "Anything to do with conveyancing?"

"It's a bit of fun worth a dozen fees—a plan for raising a laugh against Tryan and his gang of hypocrites."

"What is it? Nothing that wants a needle and thread, I hope, else I must go and tease mother."

"No, nothing sharper than your wit—except mine. I'll

tell you what it is. We'll get up a programme of the Sunday evening lecture, like a play-bill, you know—'Grand Performance of the celebrated Mountebank,' and so on. We'll bring in the Tryanites—old Landor and the rest—in appropriate characters. Procter shall print it, and we'll circulate it in the town. It will be a capital hit."

"Bravo!" said Janet, clapping her hands. She would just then have pretended to like almost anything, in her pleasure at being appealed to by her husband, and she really did like to laugh at the Tryanites. "We'll set about it directly, and sketch it out before you go to the office. I've got Tryan's sermons upstairs, but I don't think there's anything in them we can use. I've only just looked into them; they're not at all what I expected—dull, stupid things—nothing of the roaring fire-and-brimstone sort that I expected."

"Roaring? No; Tryan's as soft as a sucking dove—one of your honey-mouthed hypocrites. Plenty of devil and malice in him, though, I could see that, while he was talking to the Bishop; but as smooth as a snake outside. He's beginning a single-handed fight with me, I can see—persuading my clients away from me. We shall see who will be the first to cry *peccavi*. Milby will do better without Mr. Tryan than without Robert Dempster, I fancy! and Milby shall never be flooded with cant as long as I can raise a breakwater against it. But now, get the breakfast things cleared away, and let us set about the play-bill. Come, Mamsey, come and have a walk with me round the garden, and let us see how the cucumbers are getting on. I've never taken you round the garden for an age. Come, you don't want a bonnet. It's like walking in a greenhouse this morning."

"But she will want a parasol," said Janet. "There's one on the stand against the garden-door, Robert."

The little old lady took her son's arm with placid pleasure. She could barely reach it so as to rest upon it, but he inclined a little toward her, and accommodated his heavy long-limbed steps to her feeble pace. The cat chose to sun herself too, and walked close beside them, with tail erect, rubbing her sleek sides against their legs,—too well fed to be excited by the twittering birds. The garden was of the grassy, shady

kind, often seen attached to old houses in provincial towns; the apple-trees had had time to spread their branches very wide, the shrubs and hardy perennial plants had grown into a luxuriance that required constant trimming to prevent them from intruding on the space for walking. But the farther end, which united with green fields, was open and sunny.

It was rather sad, and yet pretty, to see that little group passing out of the shadow into the sunshine, and out of the sunshine into the shadow again: sad, because this tenderness of the son for the mother was hardly more than a nucleus of healthy life in an organ hardening by disease, because the man who was linked in this way with an innocent past, had become callous in worldliness, fevered by sensuality, enslaved by chance impulses; pretty, because it showed how hard it is to kill the deep-down fibrous roots of human love and goodness —how the man from whom we make it our pride to shrink, has yet a close brotherhood with us through some of our most sacred feelings.

As they were returning to the house, Janet met them, and said, "Now, Robert, the writing things are ready. I shall be clerk, and Mat Paine can copy it out after."

Mammy once more deposited in her arm-chair, with her knitting in her hand, and the cat purring at her elbow, Janet seated herself at the table, while Mr. Dempster placed himself near her, took out his snuff-box, and plentifully suffusing himself with the inspiring powder, began to dictate.

What he dictated, we shall see by and by.

CHAPTER VIII.

The next day, Friday, at five o'clock by the sun-dial, the large bow-window of Mrs. Jerome's parlor was open; and that lady herself was seated within its ample semicircle, having a table before her on which her best tea-tray, her best china, and her best urn-rug had already been standing in readiness for half an hour. Mrs. Jerome's best tea-service was of delicate white fluted china, with gold sprigs upon it—as pretty a

tea-service as you need wish to see, and quite good enough for chimney ornaments; indeed, as the cups were without handles, most visitors who had the distinction of taking tea out of them, wished that such charming china had already been promoted to that honorary position. Mrs. Jerome was like her china, handsome and old-fashioned. She was a buxom lady of sixty, in an elaborate lace cap fastened by a frill under her chin, a dark, well-curled front concealing her forehead, a snowy neckerchief exhibiting its ample folds as far as her waist, and a stiff gray silk gown. She had a clean damask napkin pinned before her to guard her dress during the process of tea-making; her favorite geraniums in the bow-window were looking as healthy as she could desire; her own handsome portrait, painted when she was twenty years younger, was smiling down on her with agreeable flattery; and altogether she seemed to be in as peaceful and pleasant a position as a buxom, well-drest elderly lady need desire. But, as in so many other cases, appearances were deceptive. Her mind was greatly perturbed and her temper ruffled by the fact that it was more than a quarter past five even by the losing timepiece, that it was half-past by her large gold watch, which she held in her hand as if she were counting the pulse of the afternoon, and that, by the kitchen clock, which she felt sure was not an hour too fast, it had already struck six. The lapse of time was rendered the more unendurable to Mrs. Jerome by her wonder that Mr. Jerome could stay out in the garden with Lizzie in that thoughtless way, taking it so easily that tea-time was long past, and that, after all the trouble of getting down the best tea-things, Mr. Tryan would not come.

This honor had been shown to Mr. Tryan, not at all because Mrs. Jerome had any high appreciation of his doctrine or of his exemplary activity as a pastor, but simply because he was a "Church clergyman," and as such was regarded by her with the same sort of exceptional respect that a white woman who had married a native of the Society Islands might be supposed to feel toward a white-skinned visitor from the land of her youth. For Mrs. Jerome had been reared a Churchwoman, and having attained the age of thirty before she was married, had felt the greatest repugnance in the first instance to re-

nouncing the religious forms in which she had been brought up. "You know," she said in confidence to her Church acquaintances, "I wouldn't give no ear at all to Mr. Jerome at fust; but after all, I begun to think as there was a many things worse nor goin' to chapel, an' you'd better do that nor not pay your way. Mr. Jerome had a very pleasant manner with him, an' there was niver another as kept a gig, an' 'ud make a settlement on me like him, chapel or no chapel. It seemed very odd to me for a long while, the preachin' without book, an' the stannin' up to one long prayer, istid o' changin' your postur. But la! there's nothin' as you mayn't get used to i' time; you can al'ys sit down, you know, before the prayer's done. The ministers say pretty nigh the same things as the Church parsons, by what I could iver make out, an' we're out o' chapel i' the mornin' a deal sooner nor they're out o' church. An' as for pews, ours is a deal comfortabler nor any i' Milby Church."

Mrs. Jerome, you perceive, had not a keen susceptibility to shades of doctrine, and it is probable that, after listening to Dissenting eloquence for thirty years, she might safely have re-entered the Establishment without performing any spiritual quarantine. Her mind, apparently, was of that non-porous flinty character which is not in the least danger from surrounding damp. But on the question of getting start of the sun on the day's business, and clearing her conscience of the necessary sum of meals and the consequent "washing up" as soon as possible, so that the family might be well in bed at nine, Mrs. Jerome *was* susceptible; and the present lingering pace of things, united with Mr. Jerome's unaccountable obliviousness, was not to be borne any longer. So she rang the bell for Sally.

"Goodness me, Sally! go into the garden an' see after your master. Tell him it's goin' on for six, an' Mr. Tryan 'ull niver think o' comin' now, an' it's time we got tea over. An' he's lettin' Lizzie stain her frock, I expect, among them strawberry-beds. Make her come in this minute."

No wonder Mr. Jerome was tempted to linger in the garden, for though the house was pretty and well deserved its name—"the White House," the tall damask roses that clus-

tered over the porch being thrown into relief by rough stucco of the most brilliant white, yet the garden and orchards were Mr. Jerome's glory, as well they might be; and there was nothing in which he had a more innocent pride—peace to a good man's memory! all his pride was innocent—than in conducting a hitherto uninitiated visitor over his grounds, and making him in some degree aware of the incomparable advantages possessed by the inhabitants of the White House in the matter of red-streaked apples, russets, northern greens (excellent for baking), swan-egg pears, and early vegetables, to say nothing of flowering "srubs," pink hawthorns, lavender bushes more than ever Mrs. Jerome could use, and, in short, a superabundance of everything that a person retired from business could desire to possess himself or to share with his friends. The garden was one of those old-fashioned paradises which hardly exist any longer except as memories of our childhood: no finical separation between flower and kitchen garden there; no monotony of enjoyment for one sense to the exclusion of another; but a charming paradisiacal mingling of all that was pleasant to the eyes and good for food. The rich flower-border running along every walk, with its endless succession of spring flowers, anemones, auriculas, wall-flowers, sweet-williams, campanulas, snapdragons, and tiger-lilies, had its taller beauties, such as moss and Provence roses, varied with espalier apple-trees; the crimson of a carnation was carried out in the lurking crimson of the neighboring strawberry-beds; you gathered a moss-rose one moment and a bunch of currants the next; you were in a delicious fluctuation between the scent of jasmine and the juice of gooseberries. Then what a high wall at one end, flanked by a summer-house so lofty, that after ascending its long flight of steps you could see perfectly well there was no view worth looking at; what alcoves and garden-seats in all directions; and along one side, what a hedge, tall, and firm, and unbroken, like a green wall!

It was near this hedge that Mr. Jerome was standing when Sally found him. He had set down the basket of strawberries on the gravel, and had lifted up little Lizzie in his arms to look at a bird's nest. Lizzie peeped, and then looked at her grandpa with round blue eyes, and then peeped again.

"D'ye see it, Lizzie?" he whispered.

"Yes," she whispered in return, putting her lips very near grandpa's face. At this moment Sally appeared.

"Eh, eh, Sally, what's the matter? Is Mr. Tryan come?"

"No, sir, an' Missis says she's sure he won't come now, an' she wants you to come in an' hev tea. Dear heart, Miss Lizzie, you've stained your pinafore, an' I shouldn't wonder if it's gone through to your frock. There'll be fine work! Come alonk wi' me, do."

"Nay, nay, nay, we've done no harm, we've done no harm, hev we, Lizzie? The wash-tub 'ull make all right again."

Sally, regarding the wash-tub from a different point of view, looked sourly serious, and hurried away with Lizzie, who trotted submissively along, her little head in eclipse under a large nankin bonnet, while Mr. Jerome followed leisurely with his full broad shoulders in rather a stooping posture, and his large good-natured features and white locks shaded by a broad-brimmed hat.

"Mr. Jerome, I wonder at you," said Mrs. Jerome, in a tone of indignant remonstrance, evidently sustained by a deep sense of injury, as her husband opened the parlor door. "When will you leave off invitin' people to meals an' not lettin' 'em know the time? I'll answer for't, you niver said a word to Mr. Tryan as we should take tea at five o'clock. It's just like you!"

"Nay, nay, Susan," answered the husband, in a soothing tone, "there's nothin' amiss. I told Mr. Tryan as we took tea at five punctial; mayhap summat's a-detainin' on him. He's a deal to do, an' to think on, remember."

"Why, it's struck six i' the kitchen a'ready. It's nonsense to look for him comin' now. So you may's well ring for th' urn. Now Sally's got th' heater in the fire, we may's well hev th' urn in, though he doesn't come. I niver see'd the like o' you, Mr. Jerome, for axin' people an' givin' me the trouble o' gettin' things down an' hevin' crumpets made, an' after all they don't come. I shall hev to wash every one o' these tea-things myself, for there's no trustin' Sally—she'd break a fortin i' crockery i' no time!"

"But why will you give yourself sich trouble, Susan? Our

every-day tea-things would ha' done as well for Mr. Tryan, an' they're a deal convenenter to hold."

"Yes, that's just your way, Mr. Jerome, you're al'ys a-findin' faut wi' my chany, because I bought it myself afore I was married. But let me tell you, I knowed how to choose chany if I didn't know how to choose a husband. An' where's Lizzie? You've niver left her i' the garden by herself, with her white frock on an' clean stockin's?"

"Be easy, my dear Susan, be easy; Lizzie's come in wi' Sally. She's hevin' her pinafore took off, I'll be bound. Ah! there's Mr. Tryan a-comin' through the gate."

Mrs. Jerome began hastily to adjust her damask napkin and the expression of her countenance for the reception of the clergyman, and Mr. Jerome went out to meet his guest, whom he greeted outside the door.

"Mr. Tryan, how do you do, Mr. Tryan? Welcome to the White House! I'm glad to see you, sir—I'm glad to see you."

If you had heard the tone of mingled good-will, veneration, and condolence in which this greeting was uttered, even without seeing the face that completely harmonized with it, you would have no difficulty in inferring the ground-notes of Mr. Jerome's character. To a fine ear that tone said as plainly as possible—"Whatever recommends itself to me, Thomas Jerome, as piety and goodness, shall have my love and honor. Ah, friends, this pleasant world is a sad one, too, isn't it? Let us help one another, let us help one another." And it was entirely owing to this basis of character, not at all from any clear and precise doctrinal discrimination, that Mr. Jerome had very early in life become a Dissenter. In his boyish days he had been thrown where Dissent seemed to have the balance of piety, purity, and good works on its side, and to become a Dissenter seemed to him identical with choosing God instead of mammon. That race of Dissenters is extinct in these days, when opinion has got far ahead of feeling, and every chapel-going youth can fill our ears with the advantages of the Voluntary system, the corruptions of a State Church, and the Scriptural evidence that the first Christians were Congregationalists. Mr. Jerome knew nothing of this theoretic basis for Dissent, and in the utmost extent of his polemical

discussion he had not gone further than to question whether a Christian man was bound in conscience to distinguish Christmas and Easter by any peculiar observance beyond the eating of mince-pies and cheese-cakes. It seemed to him that all seasons were alike good for thanking God, departing from evil and doing well, whereas it might be desirable to restrict the period for indulging in unwholesome forms of pastry. Mr. Jerome's dissent being of this simple, non-polemical kind, it is easy to understand that the report he heard of Mr. Tryan as a good man and a powerful preacher, who was stirring the hearts of the people, had been enough to attract him to the Paddiford Church, and that having felt himself more edified there than he had of late been under Mr. Stickney's discourses at Salem, he had driven thither repeatedly in the Sunday afternoons, and had sought an opportunity of making Mr. Tryan's acquaintance. The evening lecture was a subject of warm interest with him, and the opposition Mr. Tryan met with gave that interest a strong tinge of partisanship; for there was a store of irascibility in Mr. Jerome's nature which must find a vent somewhere, and in so kindly and upright a man could only find it in indignation against those whom he held to be enemies of truth and goodness. Mr. Tryan had not hitherto been to the White House, but yesterday, meeting Mr. Jerome in the street, he had at once accepted the invitation to tea, saying there was something he wished to talk about. He appeared worn and fatigued now, and after shaking hands with Mrs. Jerome, threw himself into a chair and looked out on the pretty garden with an air of relief.

"What a nice place you have here, Mr. Jerome! I've not seen anything so quiet and pretty since I came to Milby. On Paddiford Common, where I live, you know, the bushes are all sprinkled with soot, and there's never any quiet except in the dead of night."

"Dear heart! dear heart! That's very bad—and for you, too, as hev to study. Wouldn't it be better for you to be somewhere more out in the country like?"

"Oh no! I should lose so much time in going to and fro; and besides, I like to be *among* the people. I've no face to go and preach resignation to those poor things in their smoky

air and comfortless homes, when I come straight from every luxury myself. There are many things quite lawful for other men, which a clergyman must forego if he would do any good in a manufacturing population like this."

Here the preparations for tea were crowned by the simultaneous appearance of Lizzie and the crumpet. It is a pretty surprise, when one visits an elderly couple, to see a little figure enter in a white frock with a blond head as smooth as satin, round blue eyes, and a cheek like an apple-blossom. A toddling little girl is a centre of common feeling which makes the most dissimilar people understand each other; and Mr. Tryan looked at Lizzie with that quiet pleasure which is always genuine.

"Here we are, here we are!" said proud grandpapa. "You didn't think we'd got such a little gell as this, did you, Mr. Tryan? Why, it seems but th' other day since her mother was just such another. This is our little Lizzie, this is. Come an' shake hands wi' Mr. Tryan, Lizzie; come."

Lizzie advanced without hesitation, and put out one hand, while she fingered her coral necklace with the other, and looked up into Mr. Tryan's face with a reconnoitring gaze. He stroked the satin head, and said in his gentlest voice, "How do you do, Lizzie? will you give me a kiss?" She put up her little bud of a mouth, and then retreating a little and glancing down at her frock, said—

"Dit id my noo fock. I put it on 'tod you wad toming. Tally taid you wouldn't 'ook at it."

"Hush, hush, Lizzie! little gells must be seen and not heard," said Mrs. Jerome; while grandpapa, winking significantly, and looking radiant with delight at Lizzie's extraordinary promise of cleverness, set her up on her high cane-chair by the side of grandma, who lost no time in shielding the beauties of the new frock with a napkin.

"Well now, Mr. Tryan," said Mr. Jerome, in a very serious tone when tea had been distributed, "let me hear how you're a-goin' on about the lectur. When I was i' the town yisterday, I heared as there was pessecutin' schemes a-bein' laid again' you. I fear me those raskills'll mek things very onpleasant to you."

"I've no doubt they will attempt it; indeed, I quite expect there will be a regular mob got up on Sunday evening, as there was when the delegates returned, on purpose to annoy me and the congregation on our way to church."

"Ah, they're capible o' anything, such men as Dempster an' Budd; an' Tomlinson backs 'em wi' money, though he can't wi' brains. Howiver, Dempster's lost one client by his wicked doin's, an' I'm deceived if he won't lose more nor one. I little thought, Mr. Tryan, when I put my affairs into his hands twenty 'ear ago this Michaelmas, as he was to turn out a pessecutor o' religion. I niver lighted on a cliverer, promisiner young man nor he was then. They talked of his bein' fond of a extry glass now an' then, but niver nothin' like what he's come to since. An' it's head-piece you must look for in a lawyer, Mr. Tryan, it's head-piece. His wife, too, was al'ys an uncommon favorite of mine—poor thing! I hear sad stories about her now. But she's druv to it, she's druv to it, Mr. Tryan. A tender-hearted woman to the poor, she is, as iver lived; an' as pretty-spoken a woman as you need wish to talk to. Yes! I'd al'ys a liken' for Dempster an' his wife, spite o' iverything. But as soon as iver I heared o' that dilegate business, I says, says I, that man shall hev no more to do wi' my affairs. It may put me t' inconvenience, but I'll encourage no man as pessecutes religion."

"He is evidently the brain and hand of the persecution," said Mr. Tryan. "There may be a strong feeling against me in a large number of the inhabitants—it must be so from the great ignorance of spiritual things in this place. But I fancy there would have been no formal opposition to the lecture, if Dempster had not planned it. I am not myself the least alarmed at anything he can do; he will find I am not to be cowed or driven away by insult or personal danger. God has sent me to this place, and, by His blessing, I'll not shrink from anything I may have to encounter in doing His work among the people. But I feel it right to call on all those who know the value of the Gospel, to stand by me publicly. I think—and Mr. Landor agrees with me—that it will be well for my friends to proceed with me in a body to the church on Sunday evening. Dempster, you know, has pretended that

almost all the respectable inhabitants are opposed to the lec ture. Now, I wish that falsehood to be visibly contradicted. What do you think of the plan? I have to-day been to see several of my friends, who will make a point of being there to accompany me, and will communicate with others on the subject."

"I'll make one, Mr. Tryan, I'll make one. You shall not be wantin' in any support as I can give. Before you come to it, sir, Milby was a dead an' dark place; you are the fust man i' the Church to my knowledge as has brought the word o' God home to the people; an' I'll stan' by you, sir, I'll stan' by you. I'm a Dissenter, Mr. Tryan; I've been a Dissenter ever sin' I was fifteen 'ear old; but show me good i' the Church, an' I'm a Churchman too. When I was a boy I lived at Tilston; you mayn't know the place; the best part o' the land there belonged to Squire Sandeman; he'd a club-foot, had Squire Sandeman—lost a deal o' money by canal shares. Well, sir, as I was sayin', I lived at Tilston, an' the rector there was a terrible drinkin', fox-huntin' man; you niver see'd such a parish i' your time for wickedness; Milby's nothin' to it. Well, sir, my father was a workin' man, an' couldn't afford to gi' me ony eddication, so I went to a night-school as was kep' by a Dissenter, one Jacob Wright; an' it was from that man, sir, as I got my little schoolin' an' my knowledge o' religion. I went to chapel wi' Jacob—he was a good man, was Jacob—an' to chapel I've been iver since. But I'm no enemy o' the Church, sir, when the Church brings light to the ignorant and the sinful; an' that's what you're a-doin', Mr. Tryan. Yes, sir, I'll stan' by you. I'll go to church wi' you o' Sunday evenin'."

"You'd far better stay at home, Mr. Jerome, if I may give *my* opinion," interposed Mrs. Jerome. "It's not as I hevn't ivery respect for you, Mr. Tryan, but Mr. Jerome 'ull do you no good by his interferin'. Dissenters are not at all looked on i' Milby, an' he's as nervous as iver he can be; he'll come back as ill as ill, an' niver let me hev a wink o' sleep all night."

Mrs. Jerome had been frightened at the mention of a mob, and her retrospective regard for the religious communion of

her youth by no means inspired her with the temper of a martyr. Her husband looked at her with an expression of tender and grieved remonstrance, which might have been that of the patient patriarch on the memorable occasion when he rebuked *his* wife.

"Susan, Susan, let me beg on you not to oppose me, and put stumblin'-blocks i' the way o' doin' what's right. I can't give up my conscience, let me give up what else I may."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Tryan, feeling slightly uncomfortable, "since you are not very strong, my dear sir, it will be well, as Mrs. Jerome suggests, that you should not run the risk of any excitement."

"Say no more, Mr. Tryan. I'll stan' by you, sir. It's my duty. It's the cause o' God, sir; it's the cause o' God."

Mr. Tryan obeyed his impulse of admiration and gratitude, and put out his hand to the white-haired old man, saying, "Thank you, Mr. Jerome, thank you."

Mr. Jerome grasped the proffered hand in silence, and then threw himself back in his chair, casting a regretful look at his wife, which seemed to say, "Why don't you feel with me, Susan?"

The sympathy of this simple-minded old man was more precious to Mr. Tryan than any mere onlooker could have imagined. To persons possessing a great deal of that facile psychology which prejudges individuals by means of formulæ, and casts them, without further trouble, into duly lettered pigeon-holes, the Evangelical curate might seem to be doing simply what all other men like to do—carrying out objects which were identified not only with his theory, which is but a kind of secondary egoism, but also with the primary egoism of his feelings. Opposition may become sweet to a man when he has christened it persecution: a self-obtrusive, over-hasty reformer complacently disclaiming all merit, while his friends call him a martyr, has not in reality a career the most arduous to the fleshly mind. But Mr. Tryan was not cast in the mould of the gratuitous martyr. With a power of persistence which had been often blamed as obstinacy, he had an acute sensibility to the very hatred or ridicule he did not flinch from provoking. Every form of disapproval jarred him painfully;

and, though he fronted his opponents manfully, and often with considerable warmth of temper, he had no pugnacious pleasure in the contest. It was one of the weaknesses of his nature to be too keenly alive to every harsh wind of opinion; to wince under the frowns of the foolish; to be irritated by the injustice of those who could not possibly have the elements indispensable for judging him rightly; and with all this acute sensibility to blame, this dependence on sympathy, he had for years been constrained into a position of antagonism. No wonder, then, that good old Mr. Jerome's cordial words were balm to him. He had often been thankful to an old woman for saying "God bless you"; to a little child for smiling at him; to a dog for submitting to be patted by him.

Tea being over by this time, Mr. Tryan proposed a walk in the garden as a means of dissipating all recollection of the recent conjugal dissidence. Little Lizzie's appeal, "Me go, gandpa!" could not be rejected, so she was duly bonneted and pinafored, and then they turned out into the evening sunshine. Not Mrs. Jerome, however; she had a deeply meditated plan of retiring *ad interim* to the kitchen and washing up the best tea-things, as a mode of getting forward with the sadly retarded business of the day.

"This way, Mr. Tryan, this way," said the old gentleman; "I must take you to my pastur fust, an' show you our cow—the best milker i' the county. An' see here at these back-buildins, how convenent the dairy is; I planned it ivery bit myself. An' here I've got my little carpenter's shop an' my blacksmith's shop; I do no end o' jobs here myself. I niver could bear to be idle, Mr. Tryan; I must al'ys be at somethin' or other. It was time for me to lay by business an' mek room for younger folks. I'd got money enough, wi' only one daughter to leave it to, an' I says to myself, says I, it's time to leave off moitherin' myself wi' this world so much, an' give more time to thinkin' of another. But there's a many hours atween getting up an' lyin' down, an' thoughts are no cumber; you can move about wi' a good many on 'em in your head. See, here's the pastur."

A very pretty pasture it was, where the large-spotted short-horned cow quietly chewed the cud as she lay and looked

sleepily at her admirers—a daintily trimmed hedge all round, dotted here and there with a mountain-ash or a cherry-tree.

"I've a good bit more land besides this, worth your while to look at, but mayhap it's further nor you'd like to walk now. Bless you! I've welly an acre o' potato-ground yonders; I've a good big family to supply, you know." (Here Mr. Jerome winked and smiled significantly.) "An' that puts me i' mind, Mr. Tryan, o' summat I wanted to say to you. Clergymen like you, I know, see a deal more poverty an' that, than other folks, an' hev a many claims on 'em more nor they can well meet; an' if you'll mek use o' my purse any time, or let me know where I can be o' any help, I'll tek it very kind on you."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome, I will do so, I promise you. I saw a sad case yesterday; a collier—a fine broad-chested fellow about thirty—was killed by the falling of a wall in the Paddiford colliery. I was in one of the cottages near, when they brought him home on a door, and the shriek of his wife has been ringing in my ears ever since. There are three little children. Happily the woman has her loom, so she will be able to keep out of the workhouse; but she looks very delicate."

"Give me her name, Mr. Tryan," said Mr. Jerome, drawing out his pocket-book. "I'll call an' see her."

Deep was the fountain of pity in the good old man's heart! He often ate his dinner stintingly, oppressed by the thought that there were men, women, and children with no dinner to sit down to, and would relieve his mind by going out in the afternoon to look for some need that he could supply, some honest struggle in which he could lend a helping hand. That any living being should want, was his chief sorrow; that any rational being should waste, was the next. Sally, indeed, having been scolded by master for a too lavish use of sticks in lighting the kitchen fire, and various instances of recklessness with regard to candle-ends, considered him "as mean as aenythink," but he had as kindly a warmth as the morning sunlight, and, like the sunlight, his goodness shone on all that came in his way, from the saucy rosy-cheeked lad whom he delighted to make happy with a Christmas box, to the pallid

sufferers up dim entries, languishing under the tardy death of want and misery.

It was very pleasant to Mr. Tryan to listen to the simple chat of the old man—to walk in the shade of the incomparable orchard, and hear the story of the crops yielded by the red-streaked apple-tree, and the quite embarrassing plentifulness of the summer-pears—to drink in the sweet evening breath of the garden, as they sat in the alcove—and so, for a short interval, to feel the strain of his pastoral task relaxed.

Perhaps he felt the return to that task through the dusty roads all the more painfully, perhaps something in that quiet shady home had reminded him of the time before he had taken on him the yoke of self-denial. The strongest heart will faint sometimes under the feeling that enemies are bitter, and that friends only know half its sorrows. The most resolute soul will now and then cast back a yearning look in treading the rough mountain-path, away from the greensward and laughing voices of the valley. However it was, in the nine o'clock twilight that evening, when Mr. Tryan had entered his small study and turned the key in the door, he threw himself into the chair before his writing-table, and, heedless of the papers there, leaned his face low on his hand, and moaned heavily.

It is apt to be so in this life, I think. While we are coldly discussing a man's career, sneering at his mistakes, blaming his rashness, and labelling his opinions—"Evangelical and narrow," or "Latitudinarian and Pantheistic," or "Anglican and supercilious"—that man, in his solitude, is perhaps shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is a hard one, because strength and patience are failing him to speak the difficult word, and do the difficult deed.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Tryan showed no such symptoms of weakness on the critical Sunday. He unhesitatingly rejected the suggestion that he should be taken to church in Mr. Landor's carriage—a proposition which that gentleman made as an amendment

on the original plan, when the rumors of meditated insult became alarming. Mr. Tryan declared he would have no precautions taken, but would simply trust in God and his good cause. Some of his more timid friends thought this conduct rather defiant than wise, and reflecting that a mob has great talents for impromptu, and that legal redress is imperfect satisfaction for having one's head broken with a brickbat, were beginning to question their consciences very closely as to whether it was not a duty they owed to their families to stay at home on Sunday evening. These timorous persons, however, were in a small minority, and the generality of Mr. Tryan's friends and hearers rather exulted in an opportunity of braving insult for the sake of a preacher to whom they were attached on personal as well as doctrinal grounds. Miss Pratt spoke of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and observed that the present crisis afforded an occasion for emulating their heroism even in these degenerate times; while less highly instructed persons, whose memories were not well stored with precedents, simply expressed their determination, as Mr. Jerome had done, to "stan' by" the preacher and his cause, believing it to be the "cause of God."

One Sunday evening, then, at a quarter past six, Mr. Tryan, setting out from Mr. Landor's with a party of his friends who had assembled there, was soon joined by two other groups from Mr. Pratt's and Mr. Dunn's; and stray persons on their way to church naturally falling into rank behind this leading file, by the time they reached the entrance of Orchard Street, Mr. Tryan's friends formed a considerable procession, walking three or four abreast. It was in Orchard Street, and toward the church gates, that the chief crowd was collected; and at Mr. Dempster's drawing-room window, on the upper floor, a more select assembly of Anti-Tryanites were gathered to witness the entertaining spectacle of the Tryanites walking to church amidst the jeers and hootings of the crowd.

To prompt the popular wit with appropriate sobriquets, numerous copies of Mr. Dempster's play-bill were posted on the walls, in suitably large and emphatic type. As it is possible that the most industrious collector of mural literature may not have been fortunate enough to possess himself of this

production, which ought by all means to be preserved amongst the materials of our provincial religious history, I subjoin a faithful copy.

GRAND ENTERTAINMENT! ! !

To be given at Milby on Sunday evening next, by the
FAMOUS COMEDIAN, TRY-IT-ON!
And his first-rate Company, including not only an
UNPARALLELED CAST FOR COMEDY!
But a Large Collection of *reclaimed and converted Animals;*

Among the rest
A Bear, who used to *dance!*
A Parrot, once given to *swearing! !*
A Polygamous Pig! ! !
and
A Monkey who used to *catch fleas on a Sunday! ! ! !*
Together with a
Pair of *regenerated* LINNETS!
With an entirely new song, and *plumage.*

MR. TRY-IT-ON

Will first pass through the streets, in procession, with his unrivalled Company, warranted to have their *eyes turned up higher*, and the *corners of their mouths turned down lower*, than any other company of Mountebanks in this circuit!

AFTER WHICH

The Theatre will be opened, and the entertainment will commence at HALF-PAST SIX,
When will be presented
A piece, never before performed on any stage, entitled,

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING;
or
THE METHODIST IN A MASK.

Mr. Boanerges Soft Sawder, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON.
Old Ten per-cent Godly, ...	Mr. GANDER.
Dr. Feedemup, ...	Mr. TONIC.
Mr. Lime-Twig Lady-winner, . . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON.
Miss Piety Bait-the-hook, . . .	Miss TONIC.
Angelica, ...	Miss SERAPHINA TONIC.

After which
A miscellaneous Musical Interlude, commencing with
The *Lamentations* of *Jerom-iah!*
In nasal recitative.

To be followed by
The favorite Cackling Quartet
by

Two hen-birds who are *no chickens!*
The well-known *counter*-tenor, Mr. Done, and a *Gander*,
lineally descended from the *Goose* that laid golden eggs!

To conclude with a
GRAND CHORUS by the
Entire Orchestra of converted Animals! !

But owing to the unavoidable absence (from illness) of the *Bulldog, who has left off fighting*, Mr. Tonic has kindly undertaken, at a moment's notice, to supply the "*bark!*"

The whole to conclude with a
Screaming farce of
THE PULPIT SNATCHER.

Mr. Saintly Smooth-Face, . . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!
Mr. Worming Sneaker, . . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON! !
Mr. All-grace No-works, . . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON! ! !
Mr. Elect-and-Chosen Apewell, . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON! ! ! !
Mr. Malevolent Prayerful, . . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON! ! ! ! !
Mr. Foist-himself-everywhere, . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON! ! ! ! ! !
Mr. Flout-the-aged Upstart, . . .	Mr. TRY-IT-ON! ! ! ! ! ! !

Admission Free. A *Collection* will be made at the Doors.
Vivat Rex!

This satire, though it presents the keenest edge of Milby wit, does not strike you as lacerating, I imagine. But hatred is like fire—it makes even light rubbish deadly. And Mr. Dempster's sarcasms were not merely visible on the walls; they were reflected in the derisive glances, and audible in the jeering voices of the crowd. Through this pelting shower of nicknames and bad puns, with an *ad libitum* accompaniment of groans, howls, hisses, and hee-haws, but of no heavier missiles, Mr. Tryan walked pale and composed, giving his arm to old Mr. Landor, whose step was feeble. On the other side of him was Mr. Jerome, who still walked firmly, though his shoulders were slightly bowed.

Outwardly Mr. Tryan was composed, but inwardly he was suffering acutely from these tones of hatred and scorn. However strong his consciousness of right, he found it no stronger

armor against such weapons as derisive glances and virulent words, than against stones and clubs: his conscience was in repose, but his sensibility was bruised.

Once more only did the Evangelical curate pass up Orchard Street followed by a train of friends; once more only was there a crowd assembled to witness his entrance through the church gates. But that second time no voice was heard above a whisper, and the whispers were words of sorrow and blessing. That second time Janet Dempster was not looking on in scorn and merriment; her eyes were worn with grief and watching, and she was following her beloved friend and pastor to the grave.

CHAPTER X.

History, we know, is apt to repeat herself, and to foist very old incidents upon us with only a slight change of costume. From the time of Xerxes downwards, we have seen generals playing the braggadocio at the outset of their campaigns, and conquering the enemy with the greatest ease in after-dinner speeches. But events are apt to be in disgusting discrepancy with the anticipations of the most ingenious tacticians; the difficulties of the expedition are ridiculously at variance with able calculations; the enemy has the impudence not to fall into confusion as had been reasonably expected of him; the mind of the gallant general begins to be distracted by news of intrigues against him at home, and, notwithstanding the handsome compliments he paid to Providence as his undoubted patron before setting out, there seems every probability that the *Te Deums* will be all on the other side.

So it fell out with Mr. Dempster in his memorable campaign against the Tryanites. After all the premature triumph of the return from Elmstoke, the battle of the Evening Lecture had been lost; the enemy was in possession of the field; and the utmost hope remaining was, that by a harassing guerilla warfare he might be driven to evacuate the country.

For some time this sort of warfare was kept up with considerable spirit. The shafts of Milby ridicule were made more

formidable by being poisoned with calumny; and very ugly stories, narrated with circumstantial minuteness, were soon in circulation concerning Mr. Tryan and his hearers, from which stories it was plainly deducible that Evangelicalism led by a necessary consequence to hypocritical indulgence in vice. Some old friendships were broken asunder, and there were near relations who felt that religious differences, unmitigated by any prospect of a legacy, were a sufficient ground for exhibiting their family antipathy. Mr. Budd harangued his workmen, and threatened them with dismissal if they or their families were known to attend the evening lecture; and Mr. Tomlinson, on discovering that his foreman was a rank Tryanite, blustered to a great extent, and would have cashiered that valuable functionary on the spot, if such a retributive procedure had not been inconvenient.

On the whole, however, at the end of a few months, the balance of substantial loss was on the side of the Anti-Tryanites. Mr. Pratt, indeed, had lost a patient or two besides Mr. Dempster's family; but as it was evident that Evangelicalism had not dried up the stream of his anecdote, or in the least altered his view of any lady's constitution, it is probable that a change accompanied by so few outward and visible signs, was rather the pretext than the ground of his dismissal in those additional cases. Mr. Dunn was theatened with the loss of several good customers, Mrs. Phipps and Mrs. Lowme having set the example of ordering him to send in his bill; and the draper began to look forward to his next stock-taking with an anxiety which was but slightly mitigated by the parallel his wife suggested between his own case and that of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, who were thrust into a burning fiery furnace. For, as he observed to her the next morning, with that perspicacity which belongs to the period of shaving, whereas their deliverance consisted in the fact that their linen and woollen goods were not consumed, his own deliverance lay in precisely the opposite result. But convenience, that admirable branch system from the main line of self-interest, makes us all fellow-helpers in spite of adverse resolutions. It is probable that no speculative or theological hatred would be ultimately strong enough to resist the persuasive power of

convenience: that a latitudinarian baker, whose bread was honorably free from alum, would command the custom of any dyspeptic Puseyite; that an Arminian with the toothache would prefer a skilful Calvinistic dentist to a bungler stanch against the doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance, who would be likely to break the tooth in his head; and that a Plymouth Brother, who had a well-furnished grocery-shop in a favorable vicinage, would occasionally have the pleasure of furnishing sugar or vinegar to orthodox families that found themselves unexpectedly "out of" those indispensable commodities. In this persuasive power of convenience lay Mr. Dunn's ultimate security from martyrdom. His drapery was the best in Milby; the comfortable use and wont of procuring satisfactory articles at a moment's notice proved too strong for Anti-Tryanite zeal; and the draper could soon look forward to his next stock-taking without the support of a Scriptural parallel.

On the other hand, Mr. Dempster had lost his excellent client, Mr. Jerome—a loss which galled him out of proportion to the mere monetary deficit it represented. The attorney loved money, but he loved power still better. He had always been proud of having early won the confidence of a conventicle-goer, and of being able to "turn the prop of Salem round his thumb." Like most other men, too, he had a certain kindness toward those who had employed him when he was only starting in life; and just as we do not like to part with an old weather-glass from our study, or a two-feet ruler that we have carried in our pocket ever since we began business, so Mr. Dempster did not like having to erase his old client's name from the accustomed drawer in the bureau. Our habitual life is like a wall hung with pictures, which has been shone on by the suns of many years: take one of the pictures away, and it leaves a definite blank space, to which our eyes can never turn without a sensation of discomfort. Nay, the involuntary loss of any familiar object almost always brings a chill as from an evil omen; it seems to be the first finger-shadow of advancing death.

From all these causes combined, Mr. Dempster could never think of his lost client without strong irritation, and the very

sight of Mr. Jerome passing in the street was wormwood to him.

One day, when the old gentleman was coming up Orchard Street on his roan mare, shaking the bridle, and tickling her flank with the whip as usual, though there was a perfect mutual understanding that she was not to quicken her pace, Janet happened to be on her own door-step, and he could not resist the temptation of stopping to speak to that "nice little woman," as he always called her, though she was taller than all the rest of his feminine acquaintances. Janet, in spite of her disposition to take her husband's part in all public matters, could bear no malice against her old friend; so they shook hands.

"Well, Mrs. Dempster, I'm sorry to my heart not to see you sometimes, that I am," said Mr. Jerome, in a plaintive tone. "But if you've got any poor people as wants help, and you know's deservin', send 'em to me, send 'em to me, just the same."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome, that I will. Good-by."

Janet made the interview as short as she could, but it was not short enough to escape the observation of her husband, who, as she feared, was on his mid-day return from his office at the other end of the street, and this offence of hers, in speaking to Mr. Jerome, was the frequently recurring theme of Mr. Dempster's objurgatory domestic eloquence.

Associating the loss of his old client with Mr. Tryan's influence, Dempster began to know more distinctly why he hated the obnoxious curate. But a passionate hate, as well as a passionate love, demands some leisure and mental freedom. Persecution and revenge, like courtship and toadyism, will not prosper without a considerable expenditure of time and ingenuity, and these are not to spare with a man whose law-business and liver are both beginning to show unpleasant symptoms. Such was the disagreeable turn affairs were taking with Mr. Dempster, and, like the general distracted by home intrigues, he was too much harassed himself to lay ingenious plans for harassing the enemy.

Meanwhile, the evening lecture drew larger and larger congregations; not perhaps attracting many from that select aris-

tocratic circle in which the Lowmes and Pittmans were predominant, but winning the larger proportion of Mr. Crewe's morning and afternoon hearers, and thinning Mr. Stickney's evening audiences at Salem. Evangelicalism was making its way in Milby, and gradually diffusing its subtle odor into chambers that were bolted and barred against it. The movement, like all other religious "revivals," had a mixed effect. Religious ideas have the fate of melodies, which, once set afloat in the world, are taken up by all sorts of instruments, some of them wofully coarse, feeble, or out of tune, until people are in danger of crying out that the melody itself is detestable. It may be that some of Mr. Tryan's hearers had gained a religious vocabulary rather than religious experience; that here and there a weaver's wife, who, a few months before, had been simply a silly slattern, was converted into that more complex nuisance, a silly and sanctimonious slattern; that the old Adam, with the pertinacity of middle age, continued to tell fibs behind the counter, notwithstanding the new Adam's addiction to Bible-reading and family prayer; that the children in the Paddiford Sunday-school had their memories crammed with phrases about the blood of cleansing, imputed righteousness, and justification by faith alone, which an experience lying principally in chuck-farthing, hop-scotch, parental slappings, and longings after unattainable lollypop, served rather to darken than to illustrate; and that at Milby, in those distant days, as in all other times and places where the mental atmosphere is changing, and men are inhaling the stimulus of new ideas, folly often mistook itself for wisdom, ignorance gave itself airs of knowledge, and selfishness, turning its eyes upward, called itself religion.

Nevertheless, Evangelicalism had brought into palpable existence and operation in Milby society that idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, which is to the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life. No man can begin to mould himself on a faith or an idea without rising to a higher order of experience: a principle of subordination, of self-mastery, has been introduced into his nature; he is no longer a mere bundle of impressions, desires, and impulses.

Whatever might be the weaknesses of the ladies who pruned the luxuriance of their lace and ribbons, cut out garments for the poor, distributed tracts, quoted Scripture, and defined the true Gospel, they had learned this—that there was a divine work to be done in life, a rule of goodness higher than the opinion of their neighbors; and if the notion of a heaven in reserve for themselves was a little too prominent, yet the theory of fitness for that heaven consisted in purity of heart, in Christ-like compassion, in the subduing of selfish desires. They might give the name of piety to much that was only puritanic egoism; they might call many things sin that were not sin; but they had at least the feeling that sin was to be avoided and resisted, and color-blindness, which may mistake drab for scarlet, is better than total blindness, which sees no distinction of color at all. Miss Rebecca Linnet, in quiet attire, with a somewhat excessive solemnity of countenance, teaching at the Sunday-school, visiting the poor, and striving after a standard of purity and goodness, had surely more moral loveliness than in those flaunting peony-days, when she had no other model than the costumes of the heroines in the circulating library. Miss Eliza Pratt, listening in rapt attention to Mr. Tryan's evening lecture, no doubt found evangelical channels for vanity and egoism; but she was clearly in moral advance of Miss Phipps giggling under her feathers at old Mr. Crewe's peculiarities of enunciation. And even elderly fathers and mothers, with minds, like Mrs. Linnet's, too tough to imbibe much doctrine, were the better for having their hearts inclined toward the new preacher as a messenger from God. They became ashamed, perhaps, of their evil tempers, ashamed of their worldliness, ashamed of their trivial, futile past. The first condition of human goodness is something to love; the second, something to reverence. And this latter precious gift was brought to Milby by Mr. Tryan and Evangelicalism.

Yes, the movement was good, though it had that mixture of folly and evil which often makes what is good an offence to feeble and fastidious minds, who want human actions and characters riddled through the sieve of their own ideas, before they can accord their sympathy or admiration. Such minds,

I dare say, would have found Mr. Tryan's character very much in need of that riddling process. The blessed work of helping the world forward, happily does not wait to be done by perfect men; and I should imagine that neither Luther nor John Bunyan, for example, would have satisfied the modern demand for an ideal hero, who believes nothing but what is true, feels nothing but what is exalted, and does nothing but what is graceful. The real heroes, of God's making, are quite different: they have their natural heritage of love and conscience which they drew in with their mother's milk; they know one or two of those deep spiritual truths which are only to be won by long wrestling with their own sins and their own sorrows; they have earned faith and strength so far as they have done genuine work; but the rest is dry barren theory, blank prejudice, vague hearsay. Their insight is blended with mere opinion; their sympathy is perhaps confined in narrow conduits of doctrine, instead of flowing forth with the freedom of a stream that blesses every weed in its course; obstinacy or self-assertion will often interfuse itself with their grandest impulses; and their very deeds of self-sacrifice are sometimes only the rebound of a passionate egoism. So it was with Mr. Tryan: and any one looking at him with the bird's-eye glance of a critic might perhaps say that he made the mistake of identifying Christianity with a too narrow doctrinal system; that he saw God's work too exclusively in antagonism to the world, the flesh, and the devil; that his intellectual culture was too limited—and so on; making Mr. Tryan the text for a wise discourse on the characteristics of the Evangelical school in his day.

But I am not poised at that lofty height. I am on the level and in the press with him, as he struggles his way along the stony road, through the crowd of unloving fellow-men. He is stumbling, perhaps; his heart now beats fast with dread, now heavily with anguish; his eyes are sometimes dim with tears, which he makes haste to dash away; he pushes manfully on, with fluctuating faith and courage, with a sensitive failing body; at last he falls, the struggle is ended, and the crowd closes over the space he has left.

"One of the Evangelical clergy, a disciple of Venn," says

the critic from his bird's-eye station. "Not a remarkable specimen; the anatomy and habits of his species have been determined long ago."

Yet surely, surely the only true knowledge of our fellow-man is that which enables us to feel with him—which gives us a fine ear for the heart-pulses that are beating under the mere clothes of circumstance and opinion. Our subtlest analysis of schools and sects must miss the essential truth, unless it be lit up by the love that sees in all forms of human thought and work, the life and death struggles of separate human beings.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Tryan's most unfriendly observers were obliged to admit that he gave himself no rest. Three sermons on Sunday, a night-school for young men on Tuesday, a cottage-lecture on Thursday, addresses to school-teachers, and catechising of school-children, with pastoral visits, multiplying as his influence extended beyond his own district of Paddiford Common, would have been enough to tax severely the powers of a much stronger man. Mr. Pratt remonstrated with him on his imprudence, but could not prevail on him so far to economize time and strength as to keep a horse. On some ground or other, which his friends found difficult to explain to themselves, Mr. Tryan seemed bent on wearing himself out. His enemies were at no loss to account for such a course. The Evangelical curate's selfishness was clearly of too bad a kind to exhibit itself after the ordinary manner of a sound, respectable selfishness. "He wants to get the reputation of a saint," said one; "He's eaten up with spiritual pride," said another; "He's got his eye on some fine living, and wants to creep up the Bishop's sleeve," said a third.

Mr. Stickney, of Salem, who considered all voluntary discomfort as a remnant of the legal spirit, pronounced a severe condemnation on this self-neglect, and expressed his fear that Mr. Tryan was still far from having attained true Christian liberty. Good Mr. Jerome eagerly seized this doctrinal view

of the subject as a means of enforcing the suggestions of his own benevolence; and one cloudy afternoon, in the end of November, he mounted his roan mare with the determination of riding to Paddiford and "arguying" the point with Mr. Tryan.

The old gentleman's face looked very mournful as he rode along the dismal Paddiford lanes, between rows of grimy houses, darkened with hand-looms, while the black dust was whirled about him by the cold November wind. He was thinking of the object which had brought him on this afternoon ride, and his thoughts, according to his habit when alone, found vent every now and then in audible speech. It seemed to him, as his eyes rested on this scene of Mr. Tryan's labors, that he could understand the clergyman's self-privation without resorting to Mr. Stickney's theory of defective spiritual enlightenment. Do not philosophic doctors tell us that we are unable to discern so much as a tree, except by an unconscious cunning which combines many past and separate sensations; that no one sense is independent of another, so that in the dark we can hardly taste a fricassee, or tell whether our pipe is alight or not, and the most intelligent boy, if accommodated with claws or hoofs instead of fingers, would be likely to remain on the lowest form? If so, it is easy to understand that our discernment of men's motives must depend on the completeness of the elements we can bring from our own susceptibility and our own experience. See to it, friend, before you pronounce a too hasty judgment, that your own moral sensibilities are not of a hoofed or clawed character. The keenest eye will not serve, unless you have the delicate fingers, with their subtle nerve-filaments, which elude scientific lenses, and lose themselves in the invisible world of human sensations.

As for Mr. Jerome, he drew the elements of his moral vision from the depths of his veneration and pity. If he himself felt so much for these poor things to whom life was so dim and meagre, what must the clergyman feel who had undertaken before God to be their shepherd?

"Ah!" he whispered, interruptedly, "it's too big a load for his conscience, poor man! He wants to mek himself their

brother, like; can't abide to preach to the fastin' on a full stomach. Ah! he's better nor we are, that's it—he's a deal better nor we are."

Here Mr. Jerome shook his bridle violently, and looked up with an air of moral courage, as if Mr. Stickney had been present, and liable to take offence at this conclusion. A few minutes more brought him in front of Mrs. Wagstaff's, where Mr. Tryan lodged. He had often been here before, so that the contrast between this ugly square brick house, with its shabby bit of grass plot, stared at all round by cottage windows, and his own pretty white home, set in a paradise of orchard and garden and pasture, was not new to him; but he felt it with fresh force to-day, as he slowly fastened his roan by the bridle to the wooden paling, and knocked at the door. Mr. Tryan was at home, and sent to request that Mr. Jerome would walk up into his study, as the fire was out in the parlor below.

At the mention of a clergyman's study, perhaps, your too active imagination conjures up a perfect snuggery, where the general air of comfort is rescued from a secular character by strong ecclesiastical suggestions in the shape of the furniture, the pattern of the carpet, and the prints on the wall; where, if a nap is taken, it is in an easy-chair with a Gothic back, and the very feet rest on a warm and velvety simulation of church windows; where the pure art of rigorous English Protestantism smiles above the mantelpiece in the portrait of an eminent bishop, or a refined Anglican taste is indicated by a German print from Overbeck; where the walls are lined with choice divinity in sombre binding, and the light is softened by a screen of boughs with a gray church in the background.

But I must beg you to dismiss all such scenic prettiness, suitable as they may be to a clergyman's character and complexion; for I have to confess that Mr. Tryan's study was a very ugly little room indeed, with an ugly slap-dash pattern on the walls, an ugly carpet on the floor, and an ugly view of cottage roofs and cabbage-gardens from the window. His own person, his writing-table, and his book-case, were the only objects in the room that had the slightest air of refinement; and the sole provision for comfort was a clumsy straight-

backed arm-chair, covered with faded chintz. The man who could live in such a room, unconstrained by poverty, must either have his vision fed from within by an intense passion, or he must have chosen that least attractive form of self mortification which wears no haircloth and has no meagre days, but accepts the vulgar, the commonplace, and the ugly, whenever the highest duty seems to lie among them.

"Mr. Tryan, I hope you'll excuse me disturbin' on you," said Mr. Jerome; "but I'd summat partickler to say."

"You don't disturb me at all, Mr. Jerome; I'm very glad to have a visit from you," said Mr. Tryan, shaking him heartily by the hand, and offering him the chintz-covered "easy" chair; "it is some time since I've had an opportunity of seeing you, except on a Sunday."

"Ah, sir! your time's so taken up, I'm well aware o' that; it's not only what you hev to do, but it's goin' about from place to place; an' you don't keep a hoss, Mr. Tryan. You don't take care enough o' yourself—you don't indeed, an' that's what I come to talk to y' about."

"That's very good of you, Mr. Jerome; but I assure you I think walking does me no harm. It is rather a relief to me after speaking or writing. You know I have no great circuit to make. The farthest distance I have to walk is to Milby Church, and if ever I want a horse on Sunday, I hire Radley's, who lives not many hundred yards from me."

"Well, but now! the winter's comin' on, an' you'll get wet i' your feet, an' Pratt tells me as your constitution's dillicate, as anybody may see, for the matter o' that, wi'out bein' a doctor. An' this is the light I look at it in, Mr. Tryan: who's to fill up your place, if you was to be disabled, as I may say? Consider what a valyable life yours is. You've begun a great work i' Milby, and so you might carry it on, if you'd your health and strength. The more care you take o' yourself, the longer you'll live, belike, God willing, to do good to your fellow-creaturs."

"Why, my dear Mr. Jerome, I think I should not be a long-lived man in any case; and if I were to take care of myself under the pretext of doing more good, I should very likely die and leave nothing done after all."

"Well! but keepin' a hoss wouldn't hinder you from workin'. It 'ud help you to do more, though I'ratt says as it's usin' your voice so constant as does you the most harm. Now, isn't it—I'm no scholard, Mr. Tryan, an' I'm not a-goin' to dictate to you—but isn't it a'most a-killin' o' yourself, to go on a' that way beyond your strength? We mustn't fling our lives away."

"No, not fling them away lightly, but we are permitted to lay down our lives in a right cause. There are many duties, as you know, Mr. Jerome, which stand before taking care of our own lives."

"Ah! I can't arguy wi' you, Mr. Tryan; but what I wanted to say's this—There's my little chacenut hoss; I should take it quite a kindness if you'd hev him through the winter an' ride him. I've thought o' sellin' him a many times, for Mrs. Jerome can't abide him; and what do I want wi' two nags? But I'm fond o' the little chacenut, an' I shouldn't like to sell him. So if you'll only ride him for me, you'll do me a kindness—you will, indeed, Mr. Tryan."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome. I promise you to ask for him, when I feel that I want a nag. There is no man I would more gladly be indebted to than you; but at present I would rather not have a horse. I should ride him very little, and it would be an inconvenience to me to keep him rather than otherwise."

Mr. Jerome looked troubled and hesitating, as if he had something on his mind that would not readily shape itself into words. At last he said, "You'll excuse me, Mr. Tryan, I wouldn't be takin' a liberty, but I know what great claims you hev on you as a clergyman. Is it the expense, Mr. Tryan? is it the money?"

"No, my dear sir. I have much more than a single man needs. My way of living is quite of my own choosing, and I am doing nothing but what I feel bound to do, quite apart from money considerations. We cannot judge for one another, you know; we have each our peculiar weaknesses and temptations. I quite admit that it might be right for another man to allow himself more luxuries, and I assure you I think it no superiority in myself to do without them. On the contrary, if my heart were less rebellious, and if I were less liable to

temptation, I should not need that sort of self-denial. But," added Mr. Tryan, holding out his hand to Mr. Jerome, "I understand your kindness, and bless you for it. If I want a horse, I shall ask for the chestnut."

Mr. Jerome was obliged to rest contented with this promise, and rode home sorrowfully, reproaching himself with not having said one thing he meant to say when setting out, and with having "clean forgot" the arguments he had intended to quote from Mr. Stickney.

Mr. Jerome's was not the only mind that was seriously disturbed by the idea that the curate was overworking himself. There were tender women's hearts in which anxiety about the state of his affections was beginning to be merged in anxiety about the state of his health. Miss Eliza Pratt had at one time passed through much sleepless cogitation on the possibility of Mr. Tryan's being attached to some lady at a distance—at Laxeter, perhaps, where he had formerly held a curacy; and her fine eyes kept close watch lest any symptom of engaged affections on his part should escape her. It seemed an alarming fact that his handkerchiefs were beautifully marked with hair, until she reflected that he had an unmarried sister of whom he spoke with much affection as his father's companion and comforter. Besides, Mr. Tryan had never paid any distant visit, except one for a few days to his father, and no hint escaped him of his intending to take a house, or change his mode of living! No! he could not be engaged, though he might have been disappointed. But this latter misfortune is one from which a devoted clergyman has been known to recover, by the aid of a fine pair of gray eyes that beam on him with affectionate reverence. Before Christmas, however, her cogitations began to take another turn. She heard her father say very confidently that "Tryan was consumptive, and if he didn't take more care of himself, his life would not be worth a year's purchase"; and shame at having speculated on suppositions that were likely to prove so false, sent poor Miss Eliza's feelings with all the stronger impetus into the one channel of sorrowful alarm at the prospect of losing the pastor who had opened to her a new life of piety and self-subjection. It is a sad weakness in us, after all, that the thought of a man's

death hallows him anew to us; as if life were not sacred too—as if it were comparatively a light thing to fail in love and reverence to the brother who has to climb the whole toilsome steep with us, and all our tears and tenderness were due to the one who is spared that hard journey.

The Miss Linnets, too, were beginning to take a new view of the future, entirely uncolored by jealousy of Miss Eliza Pratt.

"Did you notice," said Mary, one afternoon when Mrs. Pettifer was taking tea with them—"did you notice that short dry cough of Mr. Tryan's yesterday? I think he looks worse and worse every week, and I only wish I knew his sister; I would write to her about him. I'm sure something should be done to make him give up part of his work, and he will listen to no one here."

"Ah," said Mrs. Pettifer, "it's a thousand pities his father and sister can't come and live with him, if he isn't to marry. But I wish with all my heart he could have taken to some nice woman as would have made a comfortable home for him. I used to think he might take to Eliza Pratt; she's a good girl, and very pretty; but I see no likelihood of it now."

"No, indeed," said Rebecca, with some emphasis; "Mr. Tryan's heart is not for any woman to win; it is all given to his work; and I could never wish to see him with a young inexperienced wife who would be a drag on him instead of a helpmate."

"He'd need have somebody, young or old," observed Mrs. Linnet, "to see as he wears a flannel wescoat, an' changes his stockins when he comes in. It's my opinion he's got that cough wi' sittin' i' wet shoes and stockins; an' that Mrs. Wagstaff's a poor addle-headed thing; she doesn't half tek care on him."

"Oh, mother!" said Rebecca, "she's a very pious woman. And I'm sure she thinks it too great a privilege to have Mr. Tryan with her, not to do the best she can to make him comfortable. She can't help her rooms being shabby."

"I've nothing to say again' her piety, my dear; but I know very well I shouldn't like her to cook my victual. When a man comes in hungry an' tired, piety won't feed him, I reck-

on. Hard carrots 'ull lie heavy on his stomach, piety or no piety. I called in one day when she was dishin' up Mr. Tryan's dinner, an' I could see the potatoes was as watery as watery. It's right enough to be speritial—I'm no enemy to that; but I like my potatoes mealy. I don't see as anybody 'ull go to heaven the sooner for not digestin' their dinner—providin' they don't die sooner, as mayhap Mr. Tryan will, poor dear man!"

"It will be a heavy day for us all when that comes to pass," said Mrs. Pettifer. "We shall never get anybody to fill up *that* gap. There's the new clergyman that's just come to Shepperton—Mr. Parry; I saw him the other day at Mrs. Bond's. He may be a very good man, and a fine preacher; they say he is; but I thought to myself, What a difference between him and Mr. Tryan! He's a sharp-sort-of-looking man, and hasn't that feeling way with him that Mr. Tryan has. What is so wonderful to me in Mr. Tryan is the way he puts himself on a level with one, and talks to one like a brother. I'm never afraid of telling him anything. He never seems to look down on anybody. He knows how to lift up those that are cast down, if ever man did."

"Yes," said Mary. "And when I see all the faces turned up to him in Paddiford Church, I often think how hard it would be for any clergyman who had to come after him; he has made the people love him so."

CHAPTER XII.

In her occasional visits to her near neighbor Mrs. Pettifer, too old a friend to be shunned because she was a Tryanite, Janet was obliged sometimes to hear allusions to Mr. Tryan, and even to listen to his praises, which she usually met with playful incredulity.

"Ah, well," she answered one day, "I like dear old Mr. Crewe and his pipes a great deal better than your Mr. Tryan and his Gospel. When I was a little toddle, Mr. and Mrs. Crewe used to let me play about in their garden, and have a

swing between the great elm-trees, because mother had no garden. I like people who are kind; kindness is my religion; and that's the reason I like you, dear Mrs. Pettifer, though you *are* a Tryanite."

"But that's Mr. Tryan's religion too—at least partly. There's nobody can give himself up more to doing good amongst the poor; and he thinks of their bodies too, as well as their souls."

"Oh yes, yes; but then he talks about faith, and grace, and all that, making people believe they are better than others, and that God loves them more than He does the rest of the world. I know he has put a great deal of that into Sally Martin's head, and it has done her no good at all. She was as nice, honest, patient a girl as need be before; and now she fancies she has new light and new wisdom. I don't like those notions."

"You mistake him, indeed you do, my dear Mrs. Dempster; I wish you'd go and hear him preach."

"Hear him preach! Why, you wicked woman, you would persuade me to disobey my husband, would you? Oh, shocking! I shall run away from you. Good-by."

A few days after this conversation, however, Janet went to Sally Martin's about three o'clock in the afternoon. The pudding that had been sent in for herself and "Mammy," struck her as just the sort of delicate morsel the poor consumptive girl would be likely to fancy, and in her usual impulsive way she had started up from the dinner-table at once, put on her bonnet, and set off with a covered plateful to the neighboring street. When she entered the house there was no one to be seen; but in the little side-room where Sally lay, Janet heard a voice. It was one she had not heard before, but she immediately guessed it to be Mr. Tryan's. Her first impulse was to set down her plate and go away, but Mrs. Martin might not be in, and then there would be no one to give Sally that delicious bit of pudding. So she stood still, and was obliged to hear what Mr. Tryan was saying. He was interrupted by one of the invalid's violent fits of coughing.

"It is very hard to bear, is it not?" he said when she was still again. "Yet God seems to support you under it wonder-

fully. Pray for me, Sally, that I might have strength too when the hour of great suffering comes. It is one of my worst weaknesses to shrink from bodily pain, and I think the time is perhaps not far off when I shall have to bear what you are bearing. But now I have tired you. We have talked enough. Good-by."

Janet was surprised, and forgot her wish not to encounter Mr. Tryan; the tone and the words were so unlike what she had expected to hear. There was none of the self-satisfied unction of the teacher, quoting, or exhorting, or expounding, for the benefit of the hearer, but a simple appeal for help, a confession of weakness. Mr. Tryan had his deeply felt troubles, then? Mr. Tryan, too, like herself, knew what it was to tremble at a foreseen trial—to shudder at an impending burthen, heavier than he felt able to bear?

The most brilliant deed of virtue could not have inclined Janet's good-will toward Mr. Tryan so much as this fellowship in suffering, and the softening thought was in her eyes when he appeared in the doorway, pale, weary, and depressed. The sight of Janet standing there with the entire absence of self-consciousness which belongs to a new and vivid impression, made him start and pause a little. Their eyes met, and they looked at each other gravely for a few moments. Then they bowed, and Mr. Tryan passed out.

There is a power in the direct glance of a sincere and loving human soul, which will do more to dissipate prejudice and kindle charity than the most elaborate arguments. The fullest exposition of Mr. Tryan's doctrine might not have sufficed to convince Janet that he had not an odious self-complacency in believing himself a peculiar child of God; but one direct, pathetic look of his had associated him with that conception forever.

This happened late in the autumn, not long before Sally Martin died. Janet mentioned her new impression to no one, for she was afraid of arriving at a still more complete contradiction of her former ideas. We have all of us considerable regard for our past self, and are not fond of casting reflections on that respected individual by a total negation of his opinions. Janet could no longer think of Mr. Tryan without sympathy,

but she still shrank from the idea of becoming his hearer and admirer. That was a reversal of the past which was as little accordant with her inclination as her circumstances.

And indeed this interview with Mr. Tryan was soon thrust into the background of poor Janet's memory by the daily thickening miseries of her life.

CHAPTER XIII.

The loss of Mr. Jerome as a client proved only the beginning of annoyances to Dempster. That old gentleman had in him the vigorous remnant of an energy and perseverance which had created his own fortune; and being, as I have hinted, given to chewing the cud of a righteous indignation with considerable relish, he was determined to carry on his retributive war against the persecuting attorney. Having some influence with Mr. Pryme, who was one of the most substantial ratepayers in the neighboring parish of Dingley, and who had himself a complex and long-standing private account with Dempster, Mr. Jerome stirred up this gentleman to an investigation of some suspicious points in the attorney's conduct of the parish affairs. The natural consequence was a personal quarrel between Dempster and Mr. Pryme; the client demanded his account, and then followed the old story of an exorbitant lawyer's bill, with the unpleasant anti-climax of taxing.

These disagreeables, extending over many months, ran along side by side with the pressing business of Mr. Armstrong's lawsuit, which was threatening to take a turn rather depreciatory of Dempster's professional prevision; and it is not surprising that, being thus kept in a constant state of irritated excitement about his own affairs, he had little time for the further exhibition of his public spirit, or for rallying the forlorn hope of sound churchmanship against cant and hypocrisy. Not a few persons who had a grudge against him, began to remark, with satisfaction, that "Dempster's luck was forsaking him"; particularly Mrs. Linnet, who thought she saw distinctly the gradual ripening of a providential scheme, whereby

a just retribution would be wrought on the man who had deprived her of Pye's Croft. On the other hand, Dempster's well-satisfied clients, who were of opinion that the punishment of his wickedness might conveniently be deferred to another world, noticed with some concern that he was drinking more than ever, and that both his temper and his driving were becoming more furious. Unhappily those additional glasses of brandy, that exasperation of loud-tongued abuse, had other effects than any that entered into the contemplation of anxious clients: they were the little superadded symbols that were perpetually raising the sum of home misery.

Poor Janet! how heavily the months rolled on for her, laden with fresh sorrows as the summer passed into autumn, the autumn into winter, and the winter into spring again. Every feverish morning, with its blank listlessness and despair, seemed more hateful than the last; every coming night more impossible to brave without arming herself in leaden stupor. The morning light brought no gladness to her: it seemed only to throw its glare on what had happened in the dim candle-light—on the cruel man seated immovable in drunken obstinacy by the dead fire and dying lights in the dining-room, rating her in harsh tones, reiterating old reproaches—or on a hideous blank of something unremembered, something that must have made that dark bruise on her shoulder, which ached as she dressed herself.

Do you wonder how it was that things had come to this pass—what offence Janet had committed in the early years of marriage to rouse the brutal hatred of this man? The seeds of things are very small: the hours that lie between sunrise and the gloom of midnight are travelled through by tiniest markings of the clock: and Janet, looking back along the fifteen years of her married life, hardly knew how or where this total misery began; hardly knew when the sweet wedded love and hope that had set forever had ceased to make a twilight of memory and relenting, before the on-coming of the utter dark.

Old Mrs. Dempster thought she saw the true beginning of it all in Janet's want of housekeeping skill and exactness. "Janet," she said to herself, "was always running about do-

ing things for other people, and neglecting her own house. That provokes a man: what use is it for a woman to be loving, and making a fuss with her husband, if she doesn't take care and keep his home just as he likes it; if she isn't at hand when he wants anything done; if she doesn't attend to all his wishes, let them be as small as they may? That was what I did when I was a wife, though I didn't make half so much fuss about loving my husband. Then, Janet had no children." . . . Ah! there Mammy Dempster had touched a true spring, not perhaps of her son's cruelty, but of half Janet's misery. If she had had babes to rock to sleep—little ones to kneel in their night-dress and say their prayers at her knees—sweet boys and girls to put their young arms round her neck and kiss away her tears, her poor hungry heart would have been fed with strong love, and might never have needed that fiery poison to still its cravings. Mighty is the force of motherhood! says the great tragic poet to us across the ages, finding, as usual, the simplest words for the sublimest fact—*δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν*. It transforms all things by its vital heat: it turns timidity into fierce courage, and dreadless defiance into tremulous submission; it turns thoughtlessness into foresight, and yet stills all anxiety into calm content; it makes selfishness become self-denial, and gives even to hard vanity the glance of admiring love. Yes; if Janet had been a mother, she might have been saved from much sin, and therefore from much of her sorrow.

But do not believe that it was anything either present or wanting in poor Janet that formed the motive of her husband's cruelty. Cruelty, like every other vice, requires no motive outside itself—it only requires opportunity. You do not suppose Dempster had any motive for drinking beyond the craving for drink; the presence of brandy was the only necessary condition. And an unloving, tyrannous, brutal man needs no motive to prompt his cruelty; he needs only the perpetual presence of a woman he can call his own. A whole park full of tame or timid-eyed animals to torment at his will would not serve him so well to glut his lust of torture; they could not *feel* as one woman does; they could not throw out the keen retort which whets the edge of hatred.

Janet's bitterness would overflow in ready words; she was not to be made meek by cruelty; she would repent of nothing in the face of injustice, though she was subdued in a moment by a word or a look that recalled the old days of fondness; and in times of comparative calm would often recover her sweet woman's habit of caressing playful affection. But such days were become rare, and poor Janet's soul was kept like a vexed sea, tossed by a new storm before the old waves have fallen. Proud, angry resistance and sullen endurance were now almost the only alternations she knew. She would bear it all proudly to the world, but proudly toward him too; her woman's weakness might shriek a cry for pity under a heavy blow, but voluntarily she would do nothing to mollify him, unless he first relented. What had she ever done to him but love him too well—but believe in him too foolishly? He had no pity on her tender flesh; he could strike the soft neck he had once asked to kiss. Yet she would not admit her wretchedness; she had married him blindly, and she would bear it out to the terrible end, whatever that might be. Better this misery than the blank that lay for her outside her married home.

But there was one person who heard all the plaints and all the outbursts of bitterness and despair which Janet was never tempted to pour into any other ear; and alas! in her worst moments, Janet would throw out wild reproaches against that patient listener. For the wrong that rouses our angry passions finds only a medium in us; it passes through us like a vibration, and we inflict what we have suffered.

Mrs. Raynor saw too clearly all through the winter that things were getting worse in Orchard Street. She had evidence enough of it in Janet's visits to her; and, though her own visits to her daughter were so timed that she saw little of Dempster personally, she noticed many indications not only that he was drinking to greater excess, but that he was beginning to lose that physical power of supporting excess which had long been the admiration of such fine spirits as Mr. Tomlinson. It seemed as if Dempster had some consciousness of this—some new distrust of himself; for, before winter was over, it was observed that he had renounced his habit of driv-

ing out alone, and was never seen in his gig without a servant by his side.

Nemesis is lame, but she is of colossal stature, like the gods; and sometimes, while her sword is not yet unsheathed, she stretches out her huge left arm and grasps her victim. The mighty hand is invisible, but the victim totters under the dire clutch.

The various symptoms that things were getting worse with the Dempsters afforded Milby gossip something new to say on an old subject. Mrs. Dempster, every one remarked, looked more miserable than ever, though she kept up the old pretence of being happy and satisfied. She was scarcely ever seen, as she used to be, going about on her good-natured errands; and even old Mrs. Crewe, who had always been wilfully blind to anything wrong in her favorite Janet, was obliged to admit that she had not seemed like herself lately. "The poor thing's out of health," said the kind little old lady, in answer to all gossip about Janet; "her headaches always were bad, and I know what headaches are; why, they make one quite delirious sometimes." Mrs. Phipps, for her part, declared she would never accept an invitation to Dempster's again; it was getting so very disagreeable to go there, Mrs. Dempster was often "so strange." To be sure, there were dreadful stories about the way Dempster used his wife; but in Mrs. Phipps's opinion, it was six of one and half a dozen of the other. Mrs. Dempster had never been like other women; she had always a flighty way with her, carrying parcels of snuff to old Mrs. Tooke, and going to drink tea with Mrs. Brinley, the carpenter's wife; and then never taking care of her clothes, always wearing the same things week-day or Sunday. A man has a poor lookout with a wife of that sort. Mr. Phipps, amiable and laconic, wondered how it was women were so fond of running each other down.

Mr. Pratt having been called in provisionally to a patient of Mr. Pilgrim's in a case of compound fracture, observed in a friendly colloquy with his brother surgeon the next day—

"So Dempster has left off driving himself, I see; he won't end with a broken neck after all. You'll have a case of meningitis and delirium tremens instead."

"Ah," said Mr. Pilgrim, "he can hardly stand it much longer at the rate he's going on, one would think. He's been confoundedly cut up about that business of Armstrong's, I fancy. It may do him some harm, perhaps, but Dempster must have feathered his nest pretty well; he can afford to lose a little business."

"His business will outlast him, that's pretty clear," said Pratt; "he'll run down like a watch with a broken spring one of these days."

Another prognostic of evil to Dempster came at the beginning of March. For then little "Mamsey" died—died suddenly. The housemaid found her seated motionless in her arm-chair, her knitting fallen down, and the tortoise-shell cat reposing on it unreproved. The little white old woman had ended her wintry age of patient sorrow, believing to the last that "Robert might have been a good husband as he had been a good son."

When the earth was thrown on Mamsey's coffin, and the son, in crape scarf and hatband, turned away homeward, his good angel, lingering with outstretched wing on the edge of the grave, cast one despairing look after him, and took flight forever.

CHAPTER XIV.

The last week in March—three weeks after old Mrs. Dempster died—occurred the unpleasant winding-up of affairs between Dempster and Mr. Pryme, and under this additional source of irritation the attorney's diurnal drunkenness had taken on its most ill-tempered and brutal phase. On the Friday morning, before setting out for Rotherby, he told his wife that he had invited "four men" to dinner at half-past six that evening. The previous night had been a terrible one for Janet, and when her husband broke his grim morning silence to say these few words, she was looking so blank and listless that he added in a loud sharp key, "Do you hear what I say? or must I tell the cook?" She started, and said, "Yes, I hear."

"Then mind and have a dinner provided, and don't go mooning about like crazy Jane."

Half an hour afterward Mrs. Raynor, quietly busy in her kitchen with her household labors—for she had only a little twelve-year-old girl as a servant—heard with trembling the rattling of the garden gate and the opening of the outer door. She knew the step, and in one short moment she lived beforehand through the coming scene. She hurried out of the kitchen, and there in the passage, as she had felt, stood Janet, her eyes worn as if by night-long watching, her dress careless, her step languid. No cheerful morning greeting to her mother—no kiss. She turned into the parlor, and, seating herself on the sofa opposite her mother's chair, looked vacantly at the walls and furniture until the corners of her mouth began to tremble, and her dark eyes filled with tears that fell unwiped down her cheeks. The mother sat silently opposite to her, afraid to speak. She felt sure there was nothing new the matter—sure that the torrent of words would come sooner or later.

"Mother! why don't you speak to me?" Janet burst out at last; "you don't care about my suffering; you are blaming me because I feel—because I am miserable."

"My child, I am not blaming you—my heart is bleeding for you. Your head is bad this morning—you have had a bad night. Let me make you a cup of tea now. Perhaps you didn't like your breakfast."

"Yes, that is what you always think, mother. It is the old story, you think. You don't ask me what it is I have had to bear. You are tired of hearing me. You are cruel, like the rest; every one is cruel in this world. Nothing but blame—blame—blame; never any pity. God is cruel to have sent me into the world to bear all this misery."

"Janet, Janet, don't say so. It is not for us to judge; we must submit; we must be thankful for the gift of life."

"Thankful for life! Why should I be thankful? God has made me with a heart to feel, and He has sent me nothing but misery. How could I help it? How could I know what would come? Why didn't you tell me, mother?—why did you let me marry? You knew what brutes men could be; and there's no help for me—no hope. I can't kill myself; I've tried; but I can't leave this world and go to another. There may be no pity for me there, as there is none here."

"Janet, my child, there *is* pity. Have I ever done anything but love you? And there is pity in God. Hasn't He put pity into your heart for many a poor sufferer? Where did it come from, if not from Him?"

Janet's nervous irritation now broke out into sobs instead of complainings; and her mother was thankful, for after that crisis there would very likely come relenting, and tenderness, and comparative calm. She went out to make some tea, and when she returned with the tray in her hands, Janet had dried her eyes and now turned them toward her mother with a faint attempt to smile; but the poor face, in its sad blurred beauty, looked all the more piteous.

"Mother will insist upon her tea," she said, "and I really think I can drink a cup. But I must go home directly, for there are people coming to dinner. Could you go with me and help me, mother?"

Mrs. Raynor was always ready to do that. She went to Orchard Street with Janet, and remained with her through the day—comforted, as evening approached, to see her become more cheerful and willing to attend to her toilet. At half-past five everything was in order; Janet was dressed; and when her mother had kissed her and said good-by, she could not help pausing a moment in sorrowful admiration at the tall rich figure, looking all the grander for the plainness of the deep mourning dress, and the noble face with its massy folds of black hair, made matronly by a simple white cap. Janet had that enduring beauty which belongs to pure majestic outline and depth of tint. Sorrow and neglect leave their traces on such beauty, but it thrills us to the last, like a glorious Greek temple, which, for all the loss it has suffered from time and barbarous hands, has gained a solemn history, and fills our imagination the more because it is incomplete to the sense.

It was six o'clock before Dempster returned from Rotherby. He had evidently drunk a great deal, and was in an angry humor; but Janet, who had gathered some little courage and forbearance from the consciousness that she had done her best to-day, was determined to speak pleasantly to him.

"Robert," she said gently, as she saw him seat himself in the dining-room in his dusty snuffy clothes, and take some

documents out of his pocket, "will you not wash and change your dress? It will refresh you."

"Leave me alone, will you?" said Dempster, in his most brutal tone.

"Do change your coat and waistcoat, they are so dusty. I've laid all your things out ready."

"Oh, you have, have you?" After a few minutes he rose very deliberately and walked upstairs into his bedroom. Janet had often been scolded before for not laying out his clothes, and she thought now, not without some wonder, that this attention of hers had brought him to compliance.

Presently he called out, "Janet!" and she went upstairs.

"Here! take that!" he said, as soon as she reached the door, flinging at her the coat she had laid out. "Another time, leave me to do as I please, will you?"

The coat, flung with great force, only brushed her shoulder, and fell some distance within the drawing-room, the door of which stood open just opposite. She hastily retreated as she saw the waistcoat coming, and one by one the clothes she had laid out were all flung into the drawing-room.

Janet's face flushed with anger, and for the first time in her life her resentment overcame the long-cherished pride that made her hide her griefs from the world. There are moments when by some strange impulse we contradict our past selves —fatal moments, when a fit of passion, like a lava stream, lays low the work of half our lives. Janet thought, "I will not pick up the clothes; they shall lie there until the visitors come, and he shall be ashamed of himself."

There was a knock at the door, and she made haste to seat herself in the drawing-room, lest the servant should enter and remove the clothes, which were lying half on the table and half on the ground. Mr. Lowme entered with a less familiar visitor, a client of Dempster's, and the next moment Dempster himself came in.

His eyes fell at once on the clothes, and then turned for an instant with a devilish glance of concentrated hatred on Janet, who, still flushed and excited, affected unconsciousness. After shaking hands with his visitors he immediately rang the bell.

"Take those clothes away," he said to the servant, not looking at Janet again.

During dinner, she kept up her assumed air of indifference, and tried to seem in high spirits, laughing and talking more than usual. In reality, she felt as if she had defied a wild beast within the four walls of his den, and he was crouching backward in preparation for his deadly spring. Dempster affected to take no notice of her, talked obstreperously, and drank steadily.

About eleven the party dispersed, with the exception of Mr. Budd, who had joined them after dinner, and appeared disposed to stay drinking a little longer. Janet began to hope that he would stay long enough for Dempster to become heavy and stupid, and so to fall asleep downstairs, which was a rare but occasional ending of his nights. She told the servants to sit up no longer, and she herself undressed and went to bed, trying to cheat her imagination into the belief that the day was ended for her. But when she lay down, she became more intensely awake than ever. Everything she had taken this evening seemed only to stimulate her senses and her apprehensions to new vividness. Her heart beat violently, and she heard every sound in the house.

At last, when it was twelve, she heard Mr. Budd go out; she heard the door slam. Dempster had not moved. Was he asleep? Would he forget? The minute seemed long, while, with a quickening pulse, she was on the stretch to catch every sound.

"Janet!" The loud jarring voice seemed to strike her like a hurled weapon.

"Janet!" he called again, moving out of the dining-room to the foot of the stairs.

There was a pause of a minute.

"If you don't come, I'll kill you."

Another pause, and she heard him turn back into the dining-room. He was gone for a light—perhaps for a weapon. Perhaps he *would* kill her. Let him. Life was as hideous as death. For years she had been rushing on to some unknown but certain horror; and now she was close upon it. She was almost glad. She was in a state

of flushed feverish defiance that neutralized her woman's terrors.

She heard his heavy step on the stairs; she saw the slowly advancing light. Then she saw the tall massive figure, and the heavy face, now fierce with drunken rage. He had nothing but the candle in his hand. He set it down on the table, and advanced close to the bed.

"So you think you'll defy me, do you? We'll see how long that will last. Get up, madam; out of bed this instant!"

In the close presence of the dreadful man—of this huge crushing force, armed with savage will—poor Janet's desperate defiance all forsook her, and her terrors came back. Trembling she got up, and stood helpless in her night-dress before her husband.

He seized her with his heavy grasp by the shoulder, and pushed her before him.

"I'll cool your hot spirit for you! I'll teach you to brave me!"

Slowly he pushed her along before him, downstairs and through the passage, where a small oil-lamp was still flickering. What was he going to do to her? She thought every moment he was going to dash her before him on the ground. But she gave no scream—she only trembled.

He pushed her on to the entrance, and held her firmly in his grasp while he lifted the latch of the door. Then he opened the door a little way, thrust her out, and slammed it behind her.

For a short space, it seemed like a deliverance to Janet. The harsh northeast wind, that blew through her thin night-dress, and sent her long heavy black hair streaming, seemed like the breath of pity after the grasp of that threatening monster. But soon the sense of release from an overpowering terror gave way before the sense of the fate that had really come upon her.

This, then, was what she had been travelling toward through her long years of misery! Not yet death. Oh! if she had been brave enough for it, death would have been better. The servants slept at the back of the house; it was impossible to make them hear, so that they might let her in

again quietly, without her husband's knowledge. And she would not have tried. He had thrust her out, and it should be forever.

There would have been dead silence in Orchard Street but for the whistling of the wind and the swirling of the March dust on the pavement. Thick clouds covered the sky; every door was closed; every window was dark. No ray of light fell on the tall white figure that stood in lonely misery on the doorstep; no eye rested on Janet as she sank down on the cold stone, and looked into the dismal night. She seemed to be looking into her own blank future.

CHAPTER XV.

The stony street, the bitter northeast wind and darkness—and in the midst of them a tender woman thrust out from her husband's home in her thin night-dress, the harsh wind cutting her naked feet, and driving her long hair away from her half-clad bosom, where the poor heart is crushed with anguish and despair.

The drowning man, urged by the supreme agony, lives in an instant through all his happy and unhappy past: when the dark flood has fallen like a curtain, memory, in a single moment, sees the drama acted over again. And even in those earlier crises, which are but types of death—when we are cut off abruptly from the life we have known, when we can no longer expect to-morrow to resemble yesterday, and find ourselves by some sudden shock on the confines of the unknown—there is often the same sort of lightning-flash through the dark and unfrequented chambers of memory.

When Janet sat down shivering on the door-stone, with the door shut upon her past life, and the future black and unshapen before her as the night, the scenes of her childhood, her youth, and her painful womanhood, rushed back upon her consciousness, and made one picture with her present desolation. The petted child taking her newest toy to bed with her—the young girl, proud in strength and beauty, dreaming that life was an

easy thing, and that it was pitiful weakness to be unhappy—the bride, passing with trembling joy from the outer court to the inner sanctuary of woman's life—the wife, beginning her initiation into sorrow, wounded, resenting, yet still hoping and forgiving—the poor bruised woman, seeking through weary years the one refuge of despair, oblivion:—Janet seemed to herself all these in the same moment that she was conscious of being seated on the cold stone under the shock of a new misery. All her early gladness, all her bright hopes and illusions, all her gifts of beauty and affection, served only to darken the riddle of her life; they were the betraying promises of a cruel destiny which had brought out those sweet blossoms only that the winds and storms might have a greater work of desolation, which had nursed her like a pet fawn into tenderness and fond expectation, only that she might feel a keener terror in the clutch of the panther. Her mother had sometimes said that troubles were sent to make us better and draw us nearer to God. What mockery that seemed to Janet! *Her* troubles had been sinking her lower from year to year, pressing upon her like heavy fever-laden vapors, and perverting the very plenitude of her nature into a deeper source of disease. Her wretchedness had been a perpetually tightening instrument of torture, which had gradually absorbed all the other sensibilities of her nature into the sense of pain and the maddened craving for relief. Oh, if some ray of hope, of pity, of consolation, would pierce through the horrible gloom, she might believe *then* in a Divine love—in a heavenly Father who cared for His children! But now she had no faith, no trust. There was nothing she could lean on in the wide world, for her mother was only a fellow-sufferer in her own lot. The poor patient woman could do little more than mourn with her daughter: she had humble resignation enough to sustain her own soul, but she could no more give comfort and fortitude to Janet, than the withered ivy-covered trunk can bear up its strong, full-boughed offspring crashing down under an Alpine storm. Janet felt she was alone: no human soul had measured her anguish, had understood her self-despair, had entered into her sorrows and her sins with that deep-sighted sympathy which is wiser than all blame, more potent than all reproof—

such sympathy as had swelled her own heart for many a sufferer. And if there was any Divine Pity, she could not feel it; it kept aloof from her, it poured no balm into her wounds, it stretched out no hand to bear up her weak resolve, to fortify her fainting courage.

Now, in her utmost loneliness, she shed no tear: she sat staring fixedly into the darkness, while inwardly she gazed at her own past, almost losing the sense that it was her own, or that she was anything more than a spectator at a strange and dreadful play.

The loud sound of the church clock, striking one, startled her. She had not been there more than half an hour, then? And it seemed to her as if she had been there half the night. She was getting benumbed with cold. With that strong instinctive dread of pain and death which had made her recoil from suicide, she started up, and the disagreeable sensation of resting on her benumbed feet helped to recall her completely to the sense of the present. The wind was beginning to make rents in the clouds, and there came every now and then a dim light of stars that frightened her more than the darkness; it was like a cruel finger pointing her out in her wretchedness and humiliation; it made her shudder at the thought of the morning twilight. What could she do? Not go to her mother —not rouse her in the dead of night to tell her this. Her mother would think she was a spectre; it would be enough to kill her with horror. And the way there was so long . . . if she should meet some one . . . yet she must seek some shelter, somewhere to hide herself. Five doors off there was Mrs. Pettifer's; that kind woman would take her in. It was of no use now to be proud and mind about the world's knowing: she had nothing to wish for, nothing to care about; only she could not help shuddering at the thought of braving the morning light, there in the street—she was frightened at the thought of spending long hours in the cold. Life might mean anguish, might mean despair; but oh, she must clutch it, though with bleeding fingers; her feet must cling to the firm earth that the sunlight would revisit, not slip into the untried abyss, where she might long even for familiar pains.

Janet trod slowly with her naked feet on the rough pave-

ment, trembling at the fitful gleams of starlight, and supporting herself by the wall, as the gusts of wind drove right against her. The very wind was cruel: it tried to push her back from the door where she wanted to go and knock and ask for pity.

Mrs. Pettifer's house did not look into Orchard Street: it stood a little way up a wide passage which opened into the street through an archway. Janet turned up the archway, and saw a faint light coming from Mrs. Pettifer's bedroom window. The glimmer of a rushlight from a room where a friend was lying, was like a ray of mercy to Janet, after that long, long time of darkness and loneliness; it would not be so dreadful to awake Mrs. Pettifer as she had thought. Yet she lingered some minutes at the door before she gathered courage to knock; she felt as if the sound must betray her to others besides Mrs. Pettifer, though there was no other dwelling that opened into the passage—only warehouses and outbuildings. There was no gravel for her to throw up at the window, nothing but heavy pavement; there was no door-bell; she must knock. Her first rap was very timid—one feeble fall of the knocker; and then she stood still again for many minutes; but presently she rallied her courage and knocked several times together, not loudly, but rapidly, so that Mrs. Pettifer, if she only heard the sound, could not mistake it. And she *had* heard it, for by and by the casement of her window was opened, and Janet perceived that she was bending out to try and discern who it was at the door.

"It is I, Mrs. Pettifer; it is Janet Dempster. Take me in, for pity's sake."

"Merciful God! what has happened?"

"Robert has turned me out. I have been in the cold a long while."

Mrs. Pettifer said no more, but hurried away from the window, and was soon at the door with a light in her hand.

"Come in, my poor dear, come in," said the good woman in a tremulous voice, drawing Janet within the door. "Come into my warm bed, and may God in heaven save and comfort you."

The pitying eyes, the tender voice, the warm touch, caused

a rush of new feeling in Janet. Her heart swelled, and she burst out suddenly, like a child, into loud passionate sobs. Mrs. Pettifer could not help crying with her, but she said, "Come upstairs, my dear, come. Don't linger in the cold."

She drew the poor sobbing thing gently upstairs, and persuaded her to get into the warm bed. But it was long before Janet could lie down. She sat leaning her head on her knees, convulsed by sobs, while the motherly woman covered her with clothes and held her arms round her to comfort her with warmth. At last the hysterical passion had exhausted itself, and she fell back on the pillow; but her throat was still agitated by piteous after-sobs, such as shake a little child even when it has found a refuge from its alarms on its mother's lap.

Now Janet was getting quieter, Mrs. Pettifer determined to go down and make a cup of tea, the first thing a kind old woman thinks of as a solace and restorative under all calamities. Happily there was no danger of awaking her servant, a heavy girl of sixteen, who was snoring blissfully in the attic, and might be kept ignorant of the way in which Mrs. Dempster had come in. So Mrs. Pettifer busied herself with rousing the kitchen fire, which was kept in under a huge "raker"—a possibility by which the coal of the midland counties atones for all its slowness and white ashes.

When she carried up the tea, Janet was lying quite still; the spasmodic agitation had ceased, and she seemed lost in thought; her eyes were fixed vacantly on the rushlight shade, and all the lines of sorrow were deepened in her face.

"Now, my dear," said Mrs. Pettifer, "let me persuade you to drink a cup of tea; you'll find it'll warm you and soothe you very much. Why, dear heart, your feet are like ice still. Now, do drink this tea, and I'll wrap 'em up in flannel, and then they'll get warm."

Janet turned her dark eyes on her old friend and stretched out her arms. She was too much oppressed to say anything; her suffering lay like a heavy weight on her power of speech; but she wanted to kiss the good kind woman. Mrs. Pettifer, setting down the cup, bent toward the sad beautiful face, and Janet kissed her with earnest sacramental kisses—such kisses

as seal a new and closer bond between the helper and the helped.

She drank the tea obediently. "It *does* warm me," she said. "But now you will get into bed. I shall lie still now."

Mrs. Pettifer felt it was the best thing she could do to lie down quietly and say no more. She hoped Janet might go to sleep. As for herself, with that tendency to wakefulness common to advanced years, she found it impossible to compose herself to sleep again after this agitating surprise. She lay listening to the clock, wondering what had led to this new outrage of Dempster's, praying for the poor thing at her side, and pitying the mother who would have to hear it all to-morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

JANET lay still, as she had promised; but the tea, which had warmed her and given her a sense of greater bodily ease, had only heightened the previous excitement of her brain. Her ideas had a new vividness, which made her feel as if she had only seen life through a dim haze before; her thoughts, instead of springing from the action of her own mind, were external existences, that thrust themselves imperiously upon her like haunting visions. The future took shape after shape of misery before her, always ending in her being dragged back again to her old life of terror, and stupor, and fevered despair. Her husband had so long overshadowed her life that her imagination could not keep hold of a condition in which that great dread was absent; and even his absence—what was it? only a dreary vacant flat, where there was nothing to strive after, nothing to long for.

At last the light of morning quenched the rushlight, and Janet's thoughts became more and more fragmentary and confused. She was every moment slipping off the level on which she lay thinking, down, down into some depth from which she tried to rise again with a start. Slumber was stealing over her weary brain: that uneasy slumber which is only better than wretched waking, because the life we seemed to live in

it determines no wretched future, because the things we do and suffer in it are but hateful shadows, and leave no impress that petrifies into an irrevocable past.

She had scarcely been asleep an hour when her movements became more violent, her mutterings more frequent and agitated, till at last she started up with a smothered cry, and looked wildly round her, shaking with terror.

"Don't be frightened, dear Mrs. Dempster," said Mrs. Pettifer, who was up and dressing; "you are with me, your old friend, Mrs. Pettifer. Nothing will harm you."

Janet sank back again on her pillow, still trembling. After lying silent a little while, she said, "It was a horrible dream. Dear Mrs. Pettifer, don't let any one know I am here. Keep it a secret. If he finds out, he will come and drag me back again."

"No, my dear, depend on me. I've just thought I shall send the servant home on a holiday—I've promised her a good while. I'll send her away as soon as she's had her breakfast, and she'll have no occasion to know you're here. There's no holding servants' tongues, if you let 'em know anything. What they don't know, they won't tell; you may trust 'em so far. But shouldn't you like me to go and fetch your mother?"

"No, not yet, not yet. I can't bear to see her yet."

"Well, it shall be just as you like. Now try and get to sleep again. I shall leave you for an hour or two, and send off Phœbe, and then bring you some breakfast. I'll lock the door behind me, so that the girl mayn't come in by chance."

The daylight changes the aspect of misery to us, as of everything else. In the night it presses on our imagination—the forms it takes are false, fitful, exaggerated; in broad day it sickens our sense with the dreary persistence of definite measurable reality. The man who looks with ghastly horror on all his property aflame in the dead of night, has not half the sense of destitution he will have in the morning, when he walks over the ruins lying blackened in the pitiless sunshine. That moment of intensest depression was come to Janet, when the daylight which showed her the walls, and chairs, and tables, and all the commonplace reality that surrounded her, seemed to lay bare the future too, and bring out into oppres-

sive distinctness all the details of a weary life to be lived from day to day, with no hope to strengthen her against that evil habit, which she loathed in retrospect and yet was powerless to resist. Her husband would never consent to her living away from him: she was become necessary to his tyranny; he would never willingly loosen his grasp on her. She had a vague notion of some protection the law might give her, if she could prove her life in danger from him; but she shrank utterly, as she had always done, from any active, public resistance or vengeance: she felt too crushed, too faulty, too liable to reproach, to have the courage, even if she had had the wish, to put herself openly in the position of a wronged woman seeking redress. She had no strength to sustain her in a course of self-defence and independence: there was a darker shadow over her life than the dread of her husband—it was the shadow of self-despair. The easiest thing would be to go away and hide herself from him. But then there was her mother: Robert had all her little property in his hands, and that little was scarcely enough to keep her in comfort without his aid. If Janet went away alone he would be sure to persecute her mother; and if she *did* go away—what then? She must work to maintain herself; she must exert herself, weary and hopeless as she was, to begin life afresh. How hard that seemed to her! Janet's nature did not belie her grand face and form: there was energy, there was strength in it; but it was the strength of the vine, which must have its broad leaves and rich clusters borne up by a firm stay. And now she had nothing to rest on—no faith, no love. If her mother had been very feeble, aged, or sickly, Janet's deep pity and tenderness might have made a daughter's duties an interest and a solace; but Mrs. Raynor had never needed tendance; she had always been giving help to her daughter; she had always been a sort of humble ministering spirit; and it was one of Janet's pangs of memory, that instead of being her mother's comfort, she had been her mother's trial. Everywhere the same sadness! Her life was a sun-dried, barren tract, where there was no shadow, and where all the waters were bitter.

No! She suddenly thought—and the thought was like an electric shock—there was one spot in her memory which

seemed to promise her an untried spring, where the waters might be sweet. That short interview with Mr. Tryan had come back upon her—his voice, his words, his look, which told her that he knew sorrow. His words had implied that he thought his death was near, yet he had a faith which enabled him to labor—enabled him to give comfort to others. That look of his came back on her with a vividness greater than it had had for her in reality: surely he knew more of the secrets of sorrow than other men; perhaps he had some message of comfort, different from the feeble words she had been used to hear from others. She was tired, she was sick of that barren exhortation—Do right, and keep a clear conscience, and God will reward you, and your troubles will be easier to bear. She wanted *strength* to do right—she wanted something to rely on besides her own resolutions; for was not the path behind her all strewn with *broken* resolutions? How could she trust in new ones? She had often heard Mr. Tryan laughed at for being fond of great sinners. She began to see a new meaning in those words; he would perhaps understand her helplessness, her wants. If she could pour out her heart to him! If she could for the first time in her life unlock all the chambers of her soul!

The impulse to confession almost always requires the presence of a fresh ear and a fresh heart; and in our moments of spiritual need, the man to whom we have no tie but our common nature, seems nearer to us than mother, brother, or friend. Our daily familiar life is but a hiding of ourselves from each other behind a screen of trivial words and deeds, and those who sit with us at the same hearth are often the farthest off from the deep human soul within us, full of unspoken evil and unacted good.

When Mrs. Pettifer came back to her, turning the key and opening the door very gently, Janet, instead of being asleep, as her good friend had hoped, was intensely occupied with her new thought. She longed to ask Mrs. Pettifer if she could see Mr. Tryan; but she was arrested by doubts and timidity. He might not feel for her—he might be shocked at her confession—he might talk to her of doctrines she could not understand or believe. She could not make up her mind yet; but

she was too restless under this mental struggle to remain in bed.

"Mrs. Pettifer," she said, "I can't lie here any longer; I must get up. Will you lend me some clothes?"

Wrapt in such drapery as Mrs. Pettifer could find for her tall figure, Janet went down into the little parlor, and tried to take some of the breakfast her friend had prepared for her. But her effort was not a successful one; her cup of tea and bit of toast were only half finished. The leaden weight of discouragement pressed upon her more and more heavily. The wind had fallen, and a drizzling rain had come on; there was no prospect from Mrs. Pettifer's parlor but a blank wall; and as Janet looked out at the window, the rain and the smoke-blackened bricks seemed to blend themselves in sickening identity with her desolation of spirit and the headachy weariness of her body.

Mrs. Pettifer got through her household work as soon as she could, and sat down with her sewing, hoping that Janet would perhaps be able to talk a little of what had passed, and find some relief by unbosoming herself in that way. But Janet could not speak to her; she was importuned with the longing to see Mr. Tryan, and yet hesitating to express it.

Two hours passed in this way. The rain went on drizzling, and Janet sat still, leaning her aching head on her hand, and looking alternately at the fire and out of the window. She felt this could not last—this motionless, vacant misery. She must determine on something, she must take some step; and yet everything was so difficult.

It was one o'clock, and Mrs. Pettifer rose from her seat, saying, "I must go and see about dinner."

The movement and the sound startled Janet from her revery. It seemed as if an opportunity were escaping her, and she said hastily, "Is Mr. Tryan in the town to-day, do you think?"

"No, I should think not, being Saturday, you know," said Mrs. Pettifer, her face lighting up with pleasure: "but he *would* come, if he was sent for. I can send Jesson's boy with a note to him any time. Should you like to see him?"

"Yes, I think I should."

"Then I'll send for him this instant."

CHAPTER XVII.

When Dempster awoke in the morning, he was at no loss to account to himself for the fact that Janet was not by his side. His hours of drunkenness were not cut off from his other hours by any blank wall of oblivion; he remembered what Janet had done to offend him the evening before, he remembered what he had done to her at midnight, just as he would have remembered if he had been consulted about a right of road.

The remembrance gave him a definite ground for the extra ill-humor which had attended his waking every morning this week, but he would not admit to himself that it cost him any anxiety. "Pooh," he said inwardly, "she would go straight to her mother's. She's as timid as a hare; and she'll never let anybody know about it. She'll be back again before night."

But it would be as well for the servants not to know anything of the affair: so he collected the clothes she had taken off the night before, and threw them into a fire-proof closet of which he always kept the key in his pocket. When he went downstairs he said to the housemaid, "Mrs. Dempster is gone to her mother's; bring in the breakfast."

The servants, accustomed to hear domestic broils, and to see their mistress put on her bonnet hastily and go to her mother's, thought it only something a little worse than usual that she should have gone thither in consequence of a violent quarrel, either at midnight, or in the early morning before they were up. The housemaid told the cook what she supposed had happened; the cook shook her head and said, "Eh, dear, dear!" but they both expected to see their mistress back again in an hour or two.

Dempster, on his return home the evening before, had ordered his man, who lived away from the house, to bring up his horse and gig from the stables at ten. After breakfast he said to the housemaid, "No one need sit up for me to-night; I shall not be at home till to-morrow evening"; and then he walked to the office to give some orders, expecting, as he re-

turned, to see the man waiting with his gig. But though the church clock had struck ten, no gig was there. In Dempster's mood this was more than enough to exasperate him. He went in to take his accustomed glass of brandy before setting out, promising himself the satisfaction of presently thundering at Dawes for being a few minutes behind his time. An outbreak of temper toward his man was not common with him; for Dempster, like most tyrannous people, had that dastardly kind of self-restraint which enabled him to control his temper where it suited his own convenience to do so; and feeling the value of Dawes, a steady punctual fellow, he not only gave him high wages, but usually treated him with exceptional civility. This morning, however, ill-humor got the better of prudence, and Dempster was determined to rate him soundly; a resolution for which Dawes gave him much better ground than he expected. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, had passed, and Dempster was setting off to the stables in a back street to see what was the cause of the delay, when Dawes appeared with the gig.

"What the devil do you keep me here for," thundered Dempster, "kicking my heels like a beggarly tailor waiting for a carrier's cart? I ordered you to be here at ten. We might have driven to Whitlow by this time."

"Why, one o' the traces was welly i' two, an' I had to take it to Brady's to be mended, an' he didn't get it done i' time."

"Then why didn't you take it to him last night? Because of your damned laziness, I suppose. Do you think I give you wages for you to choose your own hours, and come dawdling up a quarter of an hour after my time?"

"Come, give me good words, will yer?" said Dawes, sulkily. "I'm not lazy, nor no man shall call me lazy. I know well anuff what you gi' me wages for; it's for doin' what yer won't find many men as 'ull do."

"What! you impudent scoundrel," said Dempster, getting into the gig, "you think you're necessary to me, do you? As if a beastly bucket-carrying idiot like you wasn't to be got any day. Look out for a new master, then, who'll pay you for not doing as you're bid."

Dawes's blood was now fairly up. "I'll look out for a

master as has got a better charicter nor a lyin', bletherin' drunkard, an' I shouldn't hev to go fur."

Dempster, furious, snatched the whip from the socket, and gave Dawes a cut which he meant to fall across his shoulders, saying, "Take that, sir, and go to hell with you!"

Dawes was in the act of turning with the reins in his hand when the lash fell, and the cut went across his face. With white lips, he said, "I'll have the law on yer for that, lawyer as y'are," and threw the reins on the horse's back.

Dempster leaned forward, seized the reins, and drove off.

"Why, there's your friend Dempster driving out without his man again," said Mr. Luke Byles, who was chatting with Mr. Budd in the Bridge Way. "What a fool he is to drive that two-wheeled thing! he'll get pitched on his head one of these days."

"Not he," said Mr. Budd, nodding to Dempster as he passed; "he's got nine lives, Dempster has."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was dusk, and the candles were lighted before Mr. Tryan knocked at Mrs. Pettifer's door. Her messenger had brought back word that he was not at home, and all afternoon Janet had been agitated by the fear that he would not come; but as soon as that anxiety was removed by the knock at the door, she felt a sudden rush of doubt and timidity: she trembled and turned cold.

Mrs. Pettifer went to open the door, and told Mr. Tryan, in as few words as possible, what had happened in the night. As he laid down his hat and prepared to enter the parlor, she said, "I won't go in with you, for I think perhaps she would rather see you go in alone."

Janet, wrapped up in a large white shawl which threw her dark face into startling relief, was seated with her eyes turned anxiously toward the door when Mr. Tryan entered. He had not seen her since their interview at Sally Martin's long months ago; and he felt a strong movement of compassion at

the sight of the pain-stricken face which seemed to bear written on it the signs of all Janet's intervening misery. Her heart gave a great leap, as her eyes met his once more. No! she had not deceived herself: there was all the sincerity, all the sadness, all the deep pity in them her memory had told her of; more than it had told her, for in proportion as his face had become thinner and more worn, his eyes appeared to have gathered intensity.

He came forward, and, putting out his hand, said, "I am so glad you sent for me—I am so thankful you thought I could be any comfort to you." Janet took his hand in silence. She was unable to utter any words of mere politeness, or even of gratitude; her heart was too full of other words that had welled up the moment she met his pitying glance, and felt her doubts fall away.

They sat down opposite each other, and she said in a low voice, while slow difficult tears gathered in her aching eyes—

"I want to tell you how unhappy I am—how weak and wicked. I feel no strength to live or die. I thought you could tell me something that would help me." She paused.

"Perhaps I can," Mr. Tryan said, "for in speaking to me you are speaking to a fellow-sinner who has needed just the comfort and help you are needing."

"And you did find it?"

"Yes; and I trust you will find it."

"Oh, I should like to be good and to do right," Janet burst forth; "but indeed, indeed, my lot has been a very hard one. I loved my husband very dearly when we were married, and I meant to make him happy—I wanted nothing else. But he began to be angry with me for little things and . . . I don't want to accuse him . . . but he drank and got more and more unkind to me, and then very cruel, and he beat me. And that cut me to the heart. It made me almost mad sometimes to think all our love had come to that . . . I couldn't bear up against it. I had never been used to drink anything but water. I hated wine and spirits because Robert drank them so; but one day when I was very wretched, and the wine was standing on the table, I suddenly . . . I can hardly remember how I came to do it . . . I poured some wine into a large

glass and drank it. It blunted my feelings, and made me more indifferent. After that, the temptation was always coming, and it got stronger and stronger. I was ashamed, and I hated what I did; but almost while the thought was passing through my mind that I would never do it again, I did it. It seemed as if there was a demon in me always making me rush to do what I longed not to do. And I thought all the more that God was cruel; for if He had not sent me that dreadful trial, so much worse than other women have to bear, I should not have done wrong in that way. I suppose it is wicked to think so . . . I feel as if there must be goodness and right above us, but I can't see it, I can't trust in it. And I have gone on in that way for years and years. At one time it used to be better now and then, but everything has got worse lately: I felt sure it must soon end somehow. And last night he turned me out of doors . . . I don't know what to do. I will never go back to that life again if I can help it; and yet everything else seems so miserable. I feel sure that demon will be always urging me to satisfy the craving that comes upon me, and the days will go on as they have done through all those miserable years. I shall always be doing wrong, and hating myself after—sinking lower and lower, and knowing that I am sinking. Oh, can you tell me any way of getting strength? Have you ever known any one like me that got peace of mind and power to do right? Can you give me any comfort—any hope?"

While Janet was speaking, she had forgotten everything but her misery and her yearning for comfort. Her voice had risen from the low tone of timid distress to an intense pitch of imploring anguish. She clasped her hands tightly, and looked at Mr. Tryan with eager questioning eyes, with parted trembling lips, with the deep horizontal lines of overmastering pain on her brow. In this artificial life of ours, it is not often we see a human face with all a heart's agony in it, uncontrolled by self-consciousness; when we do see it, it startles us as if we had suddenly waked into the real world of which this every-day one is but a puppet-show copy. For some moments Mr. Tryan was too deeply moved to speak.

"Yes, dear Mrs. Dempster," he said at last, "there *is* com-

fort, there *is* hope for you. Believe me there is, for I speak from my own deep and hard experience." He paused, as if he had not made up his mind to utter the words that were urging themselves to his lips. Presently he continued, "Ten years ago, I felt as wretched as you do. I think my wretchedness was even worse than yours, for I had a heavier sin on my conscience. I had suffered no wrong from others as you have, and I had injured another irreparably in body and soul. The image of the wrong I had done pursued me everywhere, and I seemed on the brink of madness. I hated my life, for I thought, just as you do, that I should go on falling into temptation and doing more harm in the world; and I dreaded death, for with that sense of guilt on my soul, I felt that whatever state I entered on must be one of misery. But a dear friend to whom I opened my mind showed me it was just such as I—the helpless who feel themselves helpless—that God specially invites to come to Him, and offers all the riches of His salvation: not forgiveness only; forgiveness would be worth little if it left us under the powers of our evil passions; but strength—that strength which enables us to conquer sin."

"But," said Janet, "I can feel no trust in God. He seems always to have left me to myself. I have sometimes prayed to Him to help me, and yet everything has been just the same as before. If you felt like me, how did you come to have hope and trust?"

"Do not believe that God has left you to yourself. How can you tell but that the hardest trials you have known have been only the road by which He was leading you to that complete sense of your own sin and helplessness, without which you would never have renounced all other hopes, and trusted in His love alone? I know, dear Mrs. Dempster, I know it is hard to bear. I would not speak lightly of your sorrows. I feel that the mystery of our life is great, and at one time it seemed as dark to me as it does to you." Mr. Tryan hesitated again. He saw that the first thing Janet needed was to be assured of sympathy. She must be made to feel that her anguish was not strange to him; that he entered into the only half-expressed secrets of her spiritual weakness, before any other message of consolation could find its way to her heart.

The tale of the Divine Pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity. And Janet's anguish was not strange to Mr. Tryan. He had never been in the presence of a sorrow and a self-despair that had sent so strong a thrill through all the recesses of his saddest experience; and it is because sympathy is but a living again through our own past in a new form, that confession often prompts a response to confession. Mr. Tryan felt this prompting, and his judgment, too, told him that in obeying it he would be taking the best means of administering comfort to Janet. Yet he hesitated; as we tremble to let in the daylight on a chamber of relics which we have never visited except in curtained silence. But the first impulse triumphed, and he went on. "I had lived all my life at a distance from God. My youth was spent in thoughtless self-indulgence, and all my hopes were of a vain worldly kind. I had no thought of entering the Church; I looked forward to a political career, for my father was private secretary to a man high in the Whig Ministry, and had been promised strong interest in my behalf. At college I lived in intimacy with the gayest men, even adopting follies and vices for which I had no taste, out of mere pliancy and the love of standing well with my companions. You see, I was more guilty even then than you have been, for I threw away all the rich blessings of untroubled youth and health; I had no excuse in my outward lot. But while I was at college that event in my life occurred, which in the end brought on the state of mind I have mentioned to you—the state of self-reproach and despair, which enables me to understand to the full what you are suffering; and I tell you the facts, because I want you to be assured that I am not uttering mere vague words when I say that I have been raised from as low a depth of sin and sorrow as that in which you feel yourself to be. At college I had an attachment to a lovely girl of seventeen; she was very much below my own station in life, and I never contemplated marrying her; but I induced her to leave her father's house. I did not mean to forsake her when I left college, and I quieted all scruples of conscience by promising myself that I would always take care of poor Lucy. But on my return from a vacation spent in travelling, I found that

Lucy was gone—gone away with a gentleman, her neighbors said. I was a good deal distressed, but I tried to persuade myself that no harm would come to her. Soon afterward I had an illness which left my health delicate, and made all dissipation distasteful to me. Life seemed very wearisome and empty, and I looked with envy on every one who had some great and absorbing object—even on my cousin who was preparing to go out as a missionary, and whom I had been used to think a dismal, tedious person, because he was constantly urging religious subjects upon me. We were living in London then; it was three years since I had lost sight of Lucy; and one summer evening, about nine o'clock, as I was walking along Gower Street, I saw a knot of people on the causeway before me. As I came up to them, I heard one woman say, 'I tell you she is dead.' This awakened my interest, and I pushed my way within the circle. The body of a woman, dressed in fine clothes, was lying against a doorstep. Her head was bent on one side, and the long curls had fallen over her cheek. A tremor seized me when I saw the hair: it was light chestnut—the color of Lucy's. I knelt down and turned aside the hair; it was Lucy—dead—with paint on her cheeks. I found out afterward that she had taken poison—that she was in the power of a wicked woman—that the very clothes on her back were not her own. It was then that my past life burst upon me in all its hideousness. I wished I had never been born. I couldn't look into the future. Lucy's dead painted face would follow me there, as it did when I looked back into the past—as it did when I sat down to table with my friends, when I lay down in my bed, and when I rose up. There was only one thing that could make life tolerable to me; that was, to spend all the rest of it in trying to save others from the ruin I had brought on one. But how was that possible for me? I had no comfort, no strength, no wisdom in my own soul; how could I give them to others? My mind was dark, rebellious, at war with itself and with God."

Mr. Tryan had been looking away from Janet. His face was toward the fire, and he was absorbed in the images his memory was recalling. But now he turned his eyes on her, and they met hers, fixed on him with a look of rapt expecta-

tion, with which one clinging to a slippery summit of rock, while the waves are rising higher and higher, watches the boat that has put from shore to his rescue.

"You see, Mrs. Dempster, how deep my need was. I went on in this way for months. I was convinced that if I ever got health and comfort, it must be from religion. I went to hear celebrated preachers, and I read religious books. But I found nothing that fitted my own need. The faith which puts the sinner in possession of salvation seemed, as I understood it, to be quite out of my reach. I had no faith; I only felt utterly wretched, under the power of habits and dispositions which had wrought hideous evil. At last, as I told you, I found a friend to whom I opened all my feelings—to whom I confessed everything. He was a man who had gone through very deep experience, and could understand the different wants of different minds. He made it clear to me that the only preparation for coming to Christ and partaking of His salvation, was that very sense of guilt and helplessness which was weighing me down. He said, You are weary and heavy-laden; well, it is you Christ invites to come to Him and find rest. He asks you to cling to Him, to lean on Him; He does not command you to walk alone without stumbling. He does not tell you, as your fellow-men do, that you must first merit His love; He neither condemns nor reproaches you for the past, He only bids you come to Him that you may have life: He bids you stretch out your hands, and take of the fulness of His love. You have only to rest on Him as a child rests on its mother's arms, and you will be upborne by His divine strength. That is what is meant by faith. Your evil habits, you feel, are too strong for you; you are unable to wrestle with them; you know beforehand you shall fall. But when once we feel our helplessness in that way, and go to the Saviour, desiring to be freed from the power as well as the punishment of sin, we are no longer left to our own strength. As long as we live in rebellion against God, desiring to have our own will, seeking happiness in the things of this world, it is as if we shut ourselves up in a crowded stifling room, where we breathe only poisoned air; but we have only to walk out under the infinite heavens, and we breathe the pure free air

that gives us health, and strength, and gladness. It is just so with God's spirit: as soon as we submit ourselves to His will, as soon as we desire to be united to Him, and made pure and holy, it is as if the walls had fallen down that shut us out from God, and we are fed with His spirit, which gives us new strength."

"That is what I want," said Janet; "I have left off minding about pleasure. I think I could be contented in the midst of hardship, if I felt that God cared for me, and would give me strength to lead a pure life. But tell me, did you soon find peace and strength?"

"Not perfect peace for a long while, but hope and trust, which is strength. No sense of pardon for myself could do away with the pain I had in thinking what I had helped to bring on another. My friend used to urge upon me that my sin against God was greater than my sin against her; but—it may be from want of deeper spiritual feeling—that has remained to this hour the sin which causes me the bitterest pang. I could never rescue Lucy; but by God's blessing I might rescue other weak and falling souls; and that was why I entered the Church. I asked for nothing through the rest of my life but that I might be devoted to God's work, without swerving in search of pleasure either to the right hand or to the left. It has been often a hard struggle—but God has been with me—and perhaps it may not last much longer."

Mr. Tryan paused. For a moment he had forgotten Janet, and for a moment she had forgotten her own sorrows. When she recurred to herself, it was with a new feeling.

"Ah, what a difference between our lives! you have been choosing pain, and working, and denying yourself; and I have been thinking only of myself. I was only angry and discontented because I had pain to bear. You never had that wicked feeling that I have had so often, did you? that God was cruel to send me trials and temptations worse than others have."

"Yes, I had; I had very blasphemous thoughts, and I know that spirit of rebellion must have made the worst part of your lot. You did not feel how impossible it is for us to judge rightly of God's dealings, and you opposed yourself to His will. But what do we know? We cannot foretell the work-

ing of the smallest event in our own lot; how can we presume to judge of things that are so much too high for us? There is nothing that becomes us but entire submission, perfect resignation. As long as we set up our own will and our own wisdom against God's, we make that wall between us and His love which I have spoken of just now. But as soon as we lay ourselves entirely at His feet, we have enough light given us to guide our own steps; as the foot-soldier who hears nothing of the councils that determine the course of the great battle he is in, hears plainly enough the word of command which he must himself obey. I know, dear Mrs. Dempster, I know it is hard—the hardest thing of all, perhaps—to flesh and blood. But carry that difficulty to the Saviour along with all your other sins and weaknesses, and ask Him to pour into you a spirit of submission. He enters into your struggles; He has drunk the cup of our suffering to the dregs; He knows the hard wrestling it costs us to say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'"

"Pray with me," said Janet—"pray now that I may have light and strength."

CHAPTER XIX.

Before leaving Janet, Mr. Tryan urged her strongly to send for her mother.

"Do not wound her," he said, "by shutting her out any longer from your troubles. It is right that you should be with her."

"Yes, I will send for her," said Janet. "But I would rather not go to my mother's yet, because my husband is sure to think I am there, and he might come and fetch me. I can't go back to him . . . at least, not yet. Ought I to go back to him?"

"No, certainly not, at present. Something should be done to secure you from violence. Your mother, I think, should consult some confidential friend, some man of character and experience, who might mediate between you and your husband."

"Yes, I will send for my mother directly. But I will stay here, with Mrs. Pettifer, till something has been done. I want no one to know where I am, except you. You will come again, will you not? you will not leave me to myself?"

"You will not be left to yourself. God is with you. If I have been able to give you any comfort, it is because His power and love have been present with us. But I am very thankful that He has chosen to work through me. I shall see you again to-morrow—not before evening, for it will be Sunday, you know; but after the evening lecture I shall be at liberty. You will be in my prayers till then. In the mean time, dear Mrs. Dempster, open your heart as much as you can to your mother and Mrs. Pettifer. Cast away from you the pride that makes us shrink from acknowledging our weakness to our friends. Ask them to help you in guarding yourself from the least approach of the sin you most dread. Deprive yourself as far as possible of the very means and opportunity of committing it. Every effort of that kind made in humility and dependence is a prayer. Promise me you will do this."

"Yes, I promise you. I know I have always been too proud; I could never bear to speak to any one about myself. I have been proud toward my mother, even; it has always made me angry when she has seemed to take notice of my faults."

"Ah, dear Mrs. Dempster, you will never say again that life is blank, and that there is nothing to live for, will you? See what work there is to be done in life, both in our own souls and for others. Surely it matters little whether we have more or less of this world's comfort in these short years, when God is training us for the eternal enjoyment of His love. Keep that great end of life before you, and your troubles here will seem only the small hardships of a journey. Now I must go."

Mr. Tryan rose and held out his hand. Janet took it and said, "God has been very good to me in sending you to me. I will trust in Him. I will try to do everything you tell me."

Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but myste-

rious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasselled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in thin vapor, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.

Janet's dark grand face, still fatigued, had become quite calm, and looked up, as she sat, with a humble childlike expression at the thin blond face and slightly sunken gray eyes which now shone with hectic brightness. She might have been taken for an image of passionate strength beaten and worn with conflict; and he for an image of the self-renouncing faith which has soothed that conflict into rest. As he looked at the sweet submissive face, he remembered its look of despairing anguish, and his heart was very full as he turned away from her. "Let me only live to see this work confirmed, and then . . ."

It was nearly ten o'clock when Mr. Tryan left, but Janet was bent on sending for her mother; so Mrs. Pettifer, as the readiest plan, put on her bonnet and went herself to fetch Mrs. Raynor. The mother had been too long used to expect that every fresh week would be more painful than the last, for Mrs. Pettifer's news to come upon her with the shock of a surprise. Quietly, without any show of distress, she made up a bundle of clothes, and, telling her little maid that she should not return home that night, accompanied Mrs. Pettifer back in silence.

When they entered the parlor, Janet, wearied out, had sunk to sleep in the large chair, which stood with its back to the door. The noise of the opening door disturbed her, and she was looking round wonderingly, when Mrs. Raynor came up to her chair, and said, "It's your mother, Janet."

"Mother, dear mother!" Janet cried, clasping her closely. "I have not been a good tender child to you, but I *will* be—I will not grieve you any more."

The calmness which had withstood a new sorrow was overcome by a new joy, and the mother burst into tears.

CHAPTER XX.

On Sunday morning the rain had ceased, and Janet, looking out of the bedroom window, saw, above the house-tops, a shining mass of white cloud rolling under the far-away blue sky. It was going to be a lovely April day. The fresh sky, left clear and calm after the long vexation of wind and rain, mingled its mild influence with Janet's new thoughts and prospects. She felt a buoyant courage that surprised herself, after the cold crushing weight of despondency which had oppressed her the day before: she could think even of her husband's rage without the old overpowering dread. For a delicious hope—the hope of purification and inward peace—had entered into Janet's soul, and made it springtime there as well as in the outer world.

While her mother was brushing and coiling up her thick black hair—a favorite task, because it seemed to renew the days of her daughter's girlhood—Janet told how she came to send for Mr. Tryan, how she had remembered their meeting at Sally Martin's in the autumn, and had felt an irresistible desire to see him, and tell him her sins and her troubles.

"I see God's goodness now, mother, in ordering it so that we should meet in that way, to overcome my prejudice against him, and make me feel that he was good, and then bringing it back to my mind in the depth of my trouble. You know what foolish things I used to say about him, knowing nothing of him all the while. And yet he was the man who was to give me comfort and help when everything else failed me. It is wonderful how I feel able to speak to him as I never have done to any one before; and how every word he says to me enters my heart and has a new meaning for me. I think it must be because he has felt life more deeply than others, and has a

deeper faith. I believe everything he says at once. His words come to me like rain on the parched ground. It has always seemed to me before as if I could see behind people's words, as one sees behind a screen; but in Mr. Tryan it is his very soul that speaks."

"Well, my dear child, I love and bless him for your sake, if he has given you any comfort. I never believed the harm people said of him, though I had no desire to go and hear him, for I am contented with old-fashioned ways. I find more good teachings than I can practise in reading my Bible at home, and hearing Mr. Crewe at church. But your wants are different, my dear, and we are not all led by the same road. That was certainly good advice of Mr. Tryan's you told me of last night—that we should consult some one that may interfere for you with your husband; and I have been turning it over in my mind while I've been lying awake in the night. I think nobody will do so well as Mr. Benjamin Landor, for we must have a man that knows the law, and that Robert is rather afraid of. And perhaps he could bring about an agreement for you to live apart. Your husband's bound to maintain you, you know; and, if you liked, we could move away from Milby and live somewhere else."

"Oh, mother, we must do nothing yet; I must think about it a little longer. I have a different feeling this morning from what I had yesterday. Something seems to tell me that I must go back to Robert some time—after a little while. I loved him once better than all the world, and I have never had any children to love. There were things in me that were wrong, and I should like to make up for them if I can."

"Well, my dear, I won't persuade you. Think of it a little longer. But something must be done soon."

"How I wish I had my bonnet, and shawl, and black gown here!" said Janet, after a few minutes' silence. "I should like to go to Paddiford Church and hear Mr. Tryan. There would be no fear of my meeting Robert, for he never goes out on a Sunday morning."

"I'm afraid it would not do for me to go to the house and fetch your clothes," said Mrs. Raynor.

"Oh no, no! I must stay quietly here while you two go to

church. I will be Mrs. Pettifer's maid, and get the dinner ready for her by the time she comes back. Dear good woman! She was so tender to me when she took me in, in the night, mother, and all the next day, when I couldn't speak a word to her to thank her."

CHAPTER XXI.

The servants at Dempster's felt some surprise when the morning, noon, and evening of Saturday had passed, and still their mistress did not reappear.

"It's very odd," said Kitty, the housemaid, as she trimmed her next week's cap, while Betty, the middle-aged cook, looked on with folded arms. "Do you think as Mrs. Raynor was ill, and sent for the missis afore we was up?"

"Oh," said Betty, "if it had been that, she'd ha' been back'ards and for'ards three or four times afore now; leastways, she'd ha' sent little Ann to let us know."

"There's summat up more nor usal between her an' the master, that you may depend on," said Kitty. "I know those clothes as was lying i' the drawing-room yesterday, when the company was come, meant summat. I shouldn't wonder if that was what they've had a fresh row about. She's p'raps gone away, an's made up her mind not to come back again."

"An' i' the right on't too," said Betty. "I'd ha' overrun him long afore now, if it had been me. I wouldn't stan' bein' mauled as she is by no husband, not if he was the biggest lord i' the land. It's poor work bein' a wife at that price: I'd sooner be a cook wi'out perkises, an' hev roast, an' boil, an' fry, an' bake, all to mind at once. She may well do as she does. I know I'm glad enough of a drop o' summat myself when I'm plagued. I feel very low, like, to-night; I think I shall put my beer i' the saucepan an' warm it."

"What a one you are for warmin' your beer, Betty! I couldn't abide it—nasty bitter stuff!"

"It's fine talkin'; if you was a cook you'd know what be-

longs to bein' a cook. It's none so nice to hev a sinkin' at your stomach, I can tell you. You wouldn't think so much o' fine ribbins i' your cap then."

"Well, well, Betty, don't be grumpy. Liza Thomson, as is at Phipps's, said to me last Sunday, 'I wonder you'll stay at Dempster's,' she says, 'such goin's-on as there is.' But I says, 'There's things to put up wi' in ivery place, an' you may change, an' change, an' not better yourself when all's said an' done.' Lors! why Liza told me herself as Mrs. Phipps was as skinny as skinny i' the kitchen, for all they keep so much company; and as for follyers, she's as cross as a turkey-cock if she finds 'em out. There's nothin' o' that sort i' the missis. How pretty she come an' spoke to Job last Sunday! There isn't a good natur'der woman i' the world, that's my belief—an' handsome too. I al'ys think there's nobody looks half so well as the missis when she's got her 'air done nice. Lors! I wish I'd got long 'air like her—my 'air's a-comin' off dreadful."

"There'll be fine work to-morrow, I expect," said Betty, "when the master comes home, an' Dawes a-swearin' as he'll niver do a stroke o' work for him again. It'll be good fun if he sets the justice on him for cuttin' him wi' the whip; the master'll p'raps get his comb cut for once in his life!"

"Why, he was in a temper like a fi-end this morning," said Kitty. "I dare say it was along o' what had happened wi' the missis. We shall hev a pretty house wi' him if she doesn't come back—he'll want to be leatherin' *us*, I shouldn't wonder. He must hev somethin' t' ill-use when he's in a passion."

"I'd tek care he didn't leather me—no, not if he was my husban' ten times o'er; I'd pour hot drippin' on him sooner. But the missis hasn't a sperrit like me. He'll mek her come back, you'll see; he'll come round her somehow. There's no likelihood of her coming back to-night, though; so I should think we might fasten the doors and go to bed when we like."

On Sunday morning, however, Kitty's mind became disturbed by more definite and alarming conjectures about her mistress. While Betty, encouraged by the prospect of unwonted leisure, was sitting down to continue a letter which

had long lain unfinished between the leaves of her Bible, Kitty came running into the kitchen, and said—

"Lor'! Betty, I'm all of a tremble; you might knock me down wi' a feather. I've just looked into the missis's wardrobe, an' there's both her bonnets. She must ha' gone wi'out her bonnet. An' then I remember as her night-clothes wasn't on the bed yesterday mornin'; I thought she'd put 'em away to be washed; but she hedn't, for I've been lookin'. It's my belief he's murdered her, and shut her up i' that closet as he keeps locked al'ys. He's capible on't."

"Lors-ha'-massy! why, you'd better run to Mrs. Raynor's an' see if she's there, after all. It was p'raps all a lie."

Mrs. Raynor had returned home to give directions to her little maiden, when Kitty, with the elaborate manifestation of alarm which servants delight in, rushed in without knocking, and, holding her hands on her heart as if the consequences to that organ were likely to be very serious, said—

"If you please 'm, is the missis here?"

"No, Kitty; why are you come to ask?"

"Because 'm, she's niver been at home since yesterday mornin', since afore we was up; an' we thought somethin' must ha' happened to her."

"No, don't be frightened, Kitty. Your mistress is quite safe; I know where she is. Is your master at home?"

"No 'm; he went out yesterday mornin', an' said he shouldn't be back afore to-night."

"Well, Kitty, there's nothing the matter with your mistress. You needn't say anything to any one about her being away from home. I shall call presently and fetch her gown and bonnet. She wants them to put on."

Kitty, perceiving there was a mystery she was not to inquire into, returned to Orchard Street, really glad to know that her mistress was safe, but disappointed nevertheless at being told that she was not to be frightened. She was soon followed by Mrs. Raynor in quest of the gown and bonnet. The good mother, on learning that Dempster was not at home, had at once thought that she could gratify Janet's wish to go to Paddiford Church.

"See, my dear," she said, as she entered Mrs. Pettifer's

parlor; "I've brought you your black clothes. Robert's not at home, and is not coming till this evening. I couldn't find your best black gown, but this will do. I wouldn't bring anything else, you know; but there can't be any objection to my fetching clothes to cover you. You can go to Paddiford Church now, if you like; and I will go with you."

"That's a dear mother! Then we'll all three go together. Come and help me to get ready. Good little Mrs. Crewe! It will vex her sadly that I should go to hear Mr. Tryan. But I must kiss her, and make it up with her."

Many eyes were turned on Janet with a look of surprise as she walked up the aisle of Paddiford Church. She felt a little tremor at the notice she knew she was exciting, but it was a strong satisfaction to her that she had been able at once to take a step that would let her neighbors know her change of feeling toward Mr. Tryan: she had left herself now no room for proud reluctance or weak hesitation. The walk through the sweet spring air had stimulated all her fresh hopes, all her yearning desires after purity, strength, and peace. She thought she should find a new meaning in the prayers this morning; her full heart, like an overflowing river, wanted those ready-made channels to pour itself into; and then she should hear Mr. Tryan again, and his words would fall on her like precious balm, as they had done last night. There was a liquid brightness in her eyes as they rested on the mere walls, the pews, the weavers and colliers in their Sunday clothes. The commonest things seemed to touch the spring of love within her, just as, when we are suddenly released from an acute absorbing bodily pain, our heart and senses leap out in new freedom; we think even the noise of streets harmonious, and are ready to hug the tradesman who is wrapping up our change. A door had been opened in Janet's cold dark prison of self-despair, and the golden light of morning was pouring in its slanting beams through the blessed opening. There was sunlight in the world; there was a divine love caring for her; it had given her an earnest of good things; it had been preparing comfort for her in the very moment when she had thought herself most forsaken.

Mr. Tryan might well rejoice when his eye rested on her as

he entered his desk; but he rejoiced with trembling. He could not look at the sweet hopeful face without remembering its yesterday's look of agony; and there was the possibility that that look might return.

Janet's appearance at church was greeted not only by wondering eyes, but by kind hearts, and after the service several of Mr. Tryan's hearers with whom she had been on cold terms of late; contrived to come up to her and take her by the hand.

"Mother," said Miss Linnet, "do let us go and speak to Mrs. Dempster. I'm sure there's a great change in her mind toward Mr. Tryan. I noticed how eagerly she listened to the sermon, and she's come with Mrs. Pettifer, you see. We ought to go and give her a welcome among us."

"Why, my dear, we've never spoke friendly these five year. You know she's been as haughty as anything since I quarrelled with her husband. However, let bygones be bygones: I've no grudge again' the poor thing, more particular as she must ha' flew in her husband's face to come an' hear Mr. Tryan. Yes, let us go an' speak to her."

The friendly words and looks touched Janet a little too keenly, and Mrs. Pettifer wisely hurried her home by the least frequented road. When they reached home, a violent fit of weeping, followed by continuous lassitude, showed that the emotions of the morning had overstrained her nerves. She was suffering, too, from the absence of the long-accustomed stimulus which she had promised Mr. Tryan not to touch again. The poor thing was conscious of this, and dreaded her own weakness, as the victim of intermittent insanity dreads the oncoming of the old illusion.

"Mother," she whispered, when Mrs. Raynor urged her to lie down and rest all the afternoon, that she might be the better prepared to see Mr. Tryan in the evening—"mother, don't let me have anything if I ask for it."

In the mother's mind there was the same anxiety, and in her it was mingled with another fear—the fear lest Janet, in her present excited state of mind, should take some premature step in relation to her husband, which might lead back to all the former troubles. The hint she had thrown out in the morning of her wish to return to him after a time, showed a

new eagerness for difficult duties, that only made the long-saddened sober mother tremble.

But as evening approached, Janet's morning heroism all forsook her: her imagination, influenced by physical depression as well as by mental habits, was haunted by the vision of her husband's return home, and she began to shudder with the yesterday's dread. She heard him calling her, she saw him going to her mother's to look for her, she felt sure he would find her out, and burst in upon her.

"Pray, pray, don't leave me, don't go to church," she said to Mrs. Pettifer. "You and mother both stay with me till Mr. Tryan comes."

At twenty minutes past six the church bells were ringing for the evening service, and soon the congregation was streaming along Orchard Street in the mellow sunset. The street opened toward the west. The red half-sunken sun shed a solemn splendor on the every-day houses, and crimsoned the windows of Dempster's projecting upper story.

Suddenly a loud murmur arose and spread along the stream of church-goers, and one group after another paused and looked backward. At the far end of the street, men, accompanied by a miscellaneous group of onlookers, were slowly carrying something—a body stretched on a door. Slowly they passed along the middle of the street, lined all the way with awe-struck faces, till they turned aside and paused in the red sunlight before Dempster's door.

It was Dempster's body. No one knew whether he was alive or dead.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was probably a hard saying to the Pharisees, that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons that need no repentance." And certain ingenious philosophers of our own day must surely take offence at a joy so entirely out of correspondence with arithmetical proportion. But a heart that has been taught

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by its own sore struggles to bleed for the woes of another—that has "learned pity through suffering"—is likely to find very imperfect satisfaction in the "balance of happiness," "doctrine of compensations," and other short and easy methods of obtaining thorough complacency in the presence of pain; and for such a heart that saying will not be altogether dark. The emotions, I have observed, are but slightly influenced by arithmetical considerations: the mother, when her sweet lisping little ones have all been taken from her one after another, and she is hanging over her last dead babe, finds small consolation in the fact that the tiny dimpled corpse is but one of a necessary average, and that a thousand other babes brought into the world at the same time are doing well, and are likely to live; and if you stood beside that mother—if you knew her pang and shared it—it is probable you would be equally unable to see a ground of complacency in statistics.

Doubtless a complacency resting on that basis is highly rational; but emotion, I fear, is obstinately irrational: it insists on caring for individuals; it absolutely refuses to adopt the quantitative view of human anguish, and to admit that thirteen happy lives are a set-off against twelve miserable lives, which leaves a clear balance on the side of satisfaction. This is the inherent imbecility of feeling, and one must be a great philosopher to have got quite clear of all that, and to have emerged into the serene air of pure intellect, in which it is evident that individuals really exist for no other purpose than that abstractions may be drawn from them—abstractions that may rise from heaps of ruined lives like the sweet savor of a sacrifice in the nostrils of philosophers, and of a philosophic Deity. 'And so it comes to pass that for the man who knows sympathy because he has known sorrow, that old, old saying about the joy of angels over the repentant sinner outweighing their joy over the ninety-nine just, has a meaning which does not jar with the language of his own heart. It only tells him, that for angels too there is a transcendent value in human pain, which refuses to be settled by equations; that the eyes of angels too are turned away from the serene happiness of the righteous to bend with yearning pity on the poor

erring soul wandering in the desert where no water is; that for angels too the misery of one casts so tremendous a shadow as to eclipse the bliss of ninety-nine.

Mr. Tryan had gone through the initiation of suffering: it is no wonder, then, that Janet's restoration was the work that lay nearest his heart; and that, weary as he was in body when he entered the vestry after the evening service, he was impatient to fulfil the promise of seeing her. His experience enabled him to divine—what was the fact—that the hopefulness of the morning would be followed by a return of depression and discouragement; and his sense of the inward and outward difficulties in the way of her restoration was so keen, that he could only find relief from the foreboding it excited by lifting up his heart in prayer. There are unseen elements which often frustrate our wisest calculations—which raise up the sufferer from the edge of the grave, contradicting the prophecies of the clear-sighted physician, and fulfilling the blind clinging hopes of affection; such unseen elements Mr. Tryan called the Divine Will, and filled up the margin of ignorance which surrounds all our knowledge with the feelings of trust and resignation. Perhaps the profoundest philosophy could hardly fill it up better.

His mind was occupied in this way as he was absently taking off his gown, when Mr. Landor startled him by entering the vestry and asking abruptly—

"Have you heard the news about Dempster?"

"No," said Mr. Tryan, anxiously; "what is it?"

"He has been thrown out of his gig in the Bridge Way, and he was taken up for dead. They were carrying him home as we were coming to church, and I stayed behind to see what I could do. I went in to speak to Mrs. Dempster, and prepare her a little, but she was not at home. Dempster is not dead, however; he was stunned with the fall. Pilgrim came in a few minutes, and he says the right leg is broken in two places. It's likely to be a terrible case, with his state of body. It seems he was more drunk than usual, and they say he came along the Bridge Way flogging his horse like a madman, till at last it gave a sudden wheel, and he was pitched out. The servants said they didn't know where Mrs. Dempster was: she

had been away from home since yesterday morning; but Mrs. Raynor knew."

"I know where she is," said Mr. Tryan; "but I think it will be better for her not to be told of this just yet."

"Ah, that was what Pilgrim said, and so I didn't go round to Mrs. Raynor's. He said it would be all the better if Mrs. Dempster could be kept out of the house for the present. Do you know if anything new has happened between Dempster and his wife lately? I was surprised to hear of her being at Paddiford Church this morning."

"Yes, something has happened; but I believe she is anxious that the particulars of his behavior toward her should not be known. She is at Mrs. Pettifer's—there is no reason for concealing that, since what has happened to her husband; and yesterday, when she was in very deep trouble, she sent for me. I was very thankful she did so: I believe a great change of feeling has begun in her. But she is at present in that excitable state of mind—she has been shaken by so many painful emotions during the last two days, that I think it would be better, for this evening at least, to guard her from a new shock, if possible. But I am going now to call upon her, and I shall see how she is."

"Mr. Tryan," said Mr. Jerome, who had entered during the dialogue, and had been standing by, listening with a distressed face, "I shall take it as a favor if you'll let me know if iver there's anything I can do for Mrs. Dempster. Eh, dear, what a world this is! I think I see 'em fifteen year ago—as happy a young couple as iver was; and now, what it's all come to! I was in a hurry, like, to punish Dempster for pessecutin', but there was a stronger hand at work nor mine."

"Yes, Mr. Jerome; but don't let us rejoice in punishment, even when the hand of God alone inflicts it. The best of us are but poor wretches just saved from shipwreck: can we feel anything but awe and pity when we see a fellow-passenger swallowed by the waves?"

"Right, right, Mr. Tryan. I'm over hot and hasty, that I am. But I beg on you to tell Mrs. Dempster—I mean, in course, when you've an opportunity—tell her she's a friend at the White House as she may send for any hour o' the day."

"Yes; I shall have an opportunity, I dare say, and I will remember your wish. I think," continued Mr. Tryan, turning to Mr. Landor, "I had better see Mr. Pilgrim on my way, and learn what is exactly the state of things by this time. What do you think?"

"By all means: if Mrs. Dempster is to know, there's no one can break the news to her so well as you. I'll walk with you to Dempster's door. I dare say Pilgrim is there still. Come, Mr. Jerome, you've got to go our way too, to fetch your horse."

Mr. Pilgrim was in the passage giving some directions to his assistant, when, to his surprise, he saw Mr. Tryan enter. They shook hands; for Mr. Pilgrim, never having joined the party of the Anti-Tryanites, had no ground for resisting the growing conviction, that the Evangelical curate was really a good fellow, though he was a fool for not taking better care of himself.

"Why, I didn't expect to see you in your old enemy's quarters," he said to Mr. Tryan. "However, it will be a good while before poor Dempster shows any fight again."

"I came on Mrs. Dempster's account," said Mr. Tryan. "She is staying at Mrs. Pettifer's; she has had a great shock from some severe domestic trouble lately, and I think it will be wise to defer telling her of this dreadful event for a short time."

"Why, what has been up, eh?" said Mr. Pilgrim, whose curiosity was at once awakened. "She used to be no friend of yours. Has there been some split between them? It's a new thing for her to turn round on him."

"Oh, merely an exaggeration of scenes that must often have happened before. But the question now is, whether you think there is any immediate danger of her husband's death; for in that case, I think, from what I have observed of her feelings, she would be pained afterward to have been kept in ignorance."

"Well, there's no telling in these cases, you know. I don't apprehend speedy death, and it is not absolutely impossible that we may bring him round again. At present he's in a state of apoplectic stupor; but if that subsides, delirium is almost sure to supervene, and we shall have some painful

scenes. It's one of those complicated cases in which the delirium is likely to be of the worst kind—meningitis and delirium tremens together—and we may have a good deal of trouble with him. If Mrs. Dempster were told, I should say it would be desirable to persuade her to remain out of the house at present. She could do no good, you know. I've got nurses."

"Thank you," said Mr. Tryan. "That is what I wanted to know. Good-by."

When Mrs. Pettifer opened the door for Mr. Tryan, he told her in a few words what had happened, and begged her to take an opportunity of letting Mrs. Raynor know, that they might, if possible, concur in preventing a premature or sudden disclosure of the event to Janet.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Pettifer. "She's not fit to hear any bad news; she's very low this evening—worn out with feeling; and she's not had anything to keep her up, as she's been used to. She seems frightened at the thought of being tempted to take it."

"Thank God for it; that fear is her greatest security."

When Mr. Tryan entered the parlor this time, Janet was again awaiting him eagerly, and her pale sad face was lighted up with a smile as she rose to meet him. But the next moment she said, with a look of anxiety—

"How very ill and tired you look! You have been working so hard all day, and yet you are come to talk to me. Oh, you are wearing yourself out. I must go and ask Mrs. Pettifer to come and make you have some supper. But this is my mother; you have not seen her before, I think."

While Mr. Tryan was speaking to Mrs. Raynor, Janet hurried out, and he, seeing that this good-natured thoughtfulness on his behalf would help to counteract her depression, was not inclined to oppose her wish, but accepted the supper Mrs. Pettifer offered him, quietly talking the while about a clothing club he was going to establish in Paddiford, and the want of provident habits among the poor.

Presently, however, Mrs. Raynor said she must go home for an hour, to see how her little maiden was going on, and Mrs. Pettifer left the room with her to take the opportunity of tell-

ing her what had happened to Dempster. When Janet was left alone with Mr. Tryan, she said—

"I feel so uncertain what to do about my husband. I am so weak—my feelings change so from hour to hour. This morning, when I felt so hopeful and happy, I thought I should like to go back to him, and try to make up for what has been wrong in me. I thought, now God would help me, and I should have you to teach and advise me, and I could bear the troubles that would come. But since then—all this afternoon and evening—I have had the same feelings I used to have, the same dread of his anger and cruelty, and it seems to me as if I should never be able to bear it without falling into the same sins, and doing just what I did before. Yet, if it were settled that I should live apart from him, I know it would always be a load on my mind that I had shut myself out from going back to him. It seems a dreadful thing in life, when any one has been so near to one as a husband for fifteen years, to part and be nothing to each other any more. Surely that is a very strong tie, and I feel as if my duty can never lie quite away from it. It is very difficult to know what to do: what ought I do?"

"I think it will be well not to take any decisive step yet. Wait until your mind is calmer. You might remain with your mother for a little while; I think you have no real ground for fearing any annoyance from your husband at present; he has put himself too much in the wrong; he will very likely leave you unmolested for some time. Dismiss this difficult question from your mind just now, if you can. Every new day may bring you new grounds for decision, and what is most needful for your health of mind is repose from that haunting anxiety about the future which has been preying on you. Cast yourself on God, and trust that He will direct you; He will make your duty clear to you, if you wait submissively on Him."

"Yes; I will wait a little, as you tell me. I will go to my mother's to-morrow, and pray to be guided rightly. You will pray for me, too."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The next morning Janet was so much calmer, and at breakfast spoke so decidedly of going to her mother's, that Mrs. Pettifer and Mrs. Raynor agreed it would be wise to let her know by degrees what had befallen her husband, since as soon as she went out there would be danger of her meeting some one who would betray the fact. But Mrs. Raynor thought it would be well first to call at Dempster's, and ascertain how he was: so she said to Janet—

"My dear, I'll go home first, and see to things, and get your room ready. You needn't come yet, you know. I shall be back again in an hour or so, and we can go together."

"Oh no," said Mrs. Pettifer. "Stay with me till evening. I shall be lost without you. You needn't go till quite evening."

Janet had dipped into the "Life of Henry Martyn," which Mrs. Pettifer had from the Paddiford Lending Library, and her interest was so arrested by that pathetic missionary story, that she readily acquiesced in both propositions, and Mrs. Raynor set out.

She had been gone more than an hour, and it was nearly twelve o'clock, when Janet put down her book; and after sitting meditatively for some minutes with her eyes unconsciously fixed on the opposite wall, she rose, went to her bedroom, and, hastily putting on her bonnet and shawl, came down to Mrs. Pettifer, who was busy in the kitchen.

"Mrs. Pettifer," she said, "tell mother, when she comes back, I'm gone to see what has become of those poor Lakins in Butcher Lane. I know they're half starving, and I've neglected them so, lately. And then, I think, I'll go on to Mrs. Crewe. I want to see the dear little woman, and tell her myself about my going to hear Mr. Tryan. She won't feel it half so much if I tell her myself."

"Won't you wait till your mother comes, or put it off till to-morrow?" said Mrs. Pettifer, alarmed. "You'll hardly be back in time for dinner, if you get talking to Mrs. Crewe.

And you'll have to pass by your husband's, you know; and yesterday, you were so afraid of seeing him."

"Oh, Robert will be shut up at the office now, if he's not gone out of the town. I must go—I feel I must be doing something for some one—not be a mere useless log any longer. I've been reading about that wonderful Henry Martyn; he's just like Mr. Tryan—wearing himself out for other people, and I sit thinking of nothing but myself. I *must* go. Good-by; I shall be back soon."

She ran off before Mrs. Pettifer could utter another word of dissuasion, leaving the good woman in considerable anxiety lest this new impulse of Janet's should frustrate all precautions to save her from a sudden shock.

Janet having paid her visit in Butcher Lane, turned again into Orchard Street on her way to Mrs. Crewe's, and was thinking, rather sadly, that her mother's economical housekeeping would leave no abundant surplus to be sent to the hungry Lakins, when she saw Mr. Pilgrim in advance of her on the other side of the street. He was walking at a rapid pace, and when he reached Dempster's door he turned and entered without knocking.

Janet was startled. Mr. Pilgrim would never enter in that way unless there were some one very ill in the house. It was her husband; she felt certain of it at once. Something had happened to him. Without a moment's pause, she ran across the street, opened the door, and entered. There was no one in the passage. The dining-room door was wide open—no one was there. Mr. Pilgrim, then, was already upstairs. She rushed up at once to Dempster's room—her own room. The door was open, and she paused in pale horror at the sight before her, which seemed to stand out only with the more appalling distinctness because the noonday light was darkened to twilight in the chamber.

Two strong nurses were using their utmost force to hold Dempster in bed, while the medical assistant was applying a sponge to his head, and Mr. Pilgrim was busy adjusting some apparatus in the background. Dempster's face was purple and swollen, his eyes dilated, and fixed with a look of dire terror on something he seemed to see approaching him from

the iron closet. He trembled violently, and struggled as if to jump out of bed.

"Let me go, let me go," he said in a loud, hoarse whisper; "she's coming . . . she's cold . . . she's dead . . . she'll strangle me with her black hair. Ah!" he shrieked aloud, "her hair is all serpents . . . they're black serpents . . . they hiss . . . they hiss . . . let me go . . . let me go . . . she wants to drag me with her cold arms . . . her arms are serpents . . . they are great white serpents . . . they'll twine round me . . . she wants to drag me into the cold water . . . her bosom is cold . . . it is black . . . it is all serpents . . ."

"No, Robert," Janet cried, in tones of yearning pity, rushing to the side of the bed, and stretching out her arms toward him, "no, here is Janet. She is not dead—she forgives you."

Dempster's maddened senses seemed to receive some new impression from her appearance. The terror gave way to rage.

"Ha! you sneaking hypocrite!" he burst out in a grating voice, "you threaten me . . . you mean to have your revenge on me, do you? Do your worst! I've got the law on my side . . . I know the law . . . I'll hunt you down like a hare . . . prove it . . . prove that I was tampered with . . . prove that I took the money . . . prove it . . . you can prove nothing . . . you damned psalm-singing maggots! I'll make a fire under you, and smoke off the whole pack of you . . . I'll sweep you up . . . I'll grind you to powder . . . small powder . . . (here his voice dropped to a low tone of shuddering disgust) . . . powder on the bed-clothes . . . running about . . . black lice . . . they are coming in swarms . . . Janet! come and take them away . . . curse you! why don't you come? Janet!"

Poor Janet was kneeling by the bed with her face buried in her hands. She almost wished her worst moment back again rather than this. It seemed as if her husband was already imprisoned in misery, and she could not reach him—his ear deaf forever to the sounds of love and forgiveness. His sins had made a hard crust round his soul; her pitying voice could not pierce it.

"Not there, isn't she?" he went on in a defiant tone.

"Why do you ask me where she is? I'll have every drop of yellow blood out of your veins if you come questioning me. Your blood is yellow . . . in your purse . . . running out of your purse . . . What! you're changing it into toads, are you? They're crawling . . . they're flying . . . they're flying about my head . . . the toads are flying about. Ostler! ostler! bring out my gig . . . bring it out, you lazy beast . . . ha! you'll follow me, will you? . . . you'll fly about my head . . . you've got fiery tongues . . . Ostler! curse you! why don't you come? Janet! come and take the toads away . . . Janet!"

This last time he uttered her name with such a shriek of terror, that Janet involuntarily started up from her knees, and stood as if petrified by the horrible vibration. Dempster stared wildly in silence for some moments; then he spoke again in a hoarse whisper—

"Dead . . . is she dead? *She* did it, then. She buried herself in the iron chest . . . she left her clothes out, though . . . she isn't dead . . . why do you pretend she's dead? . . . she's coming . . . she's coming out of the iron closet . . . there are the black serpents . . . stop her . . . let me go . . . stop her . . . she wants to drag me away into the cold black water . . . her bosom is black . . . it is all serpents . . . they are getting longer . . . the great white serpents are getting longer . . ."

Here Mr. Pilgrim came forward with the apparatus to bind him, but Dempster's struggles became more and more violent. "Ostler! ostler!" he shouted, "bring out the gig . . . give me the whip!"—and bursting loose from the strong hands that held him, he began to flog the bed-clothes furiously with his right arm.

"Get along, you lame brute!—sc—sc—sc! that's it! there you go! They think they've outwitted me, do they? The sneaking idiots! I'll be up with them by and by. I'll make them say the Lord's Prayer backward . . . I'll pepper them so that the devil shall eat them raw . . . sc—sc—sc—we shall see who'll be the winner yet . . . get along, you damned limping beast . . . I'll lay your back open . . . I'll . . ."

He raised himself with a stronger effort than ever to flog

the bed-clothes, and fell back in convulsions. Janet gave a scream, and sank on her knees again. She thought he was dead.

As soon as Mr. Pilgrim was able to give her a moment's attention, he came to her, and, taking her by the arm, attempted to draw her gently out of the room.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Dempster, let me persuade you not to remain in the room at present. We shall soon relieve these symptoms, I hope; it is nothing but the delirium that ordinarily attends such cases."

"Oh, what is the matter? what brought it on?"

"He fell out of the gig; the right leg is broken. It is a terrible accident, and I don't disguise that there is considerable danger attending it, owing to the state of the brain. But Mr. Dempster has a strong constitution, you know; in a few days these symptoms may be allayed, and he may do well. Let me beg of you to keep out of the room at present: you can do no good until Mr. Dempster is better, and able to know you. But you ought not to be alone; let me advise you to have Mrs. Raynor with you."

"Yes, I will send for mother. But you must not object to my being in the room. I shall be very quiet now, only just at first the shock was so great; I knew nothing about it. I can help the nurses a great deal; I can put the cold things to his head. He may be sensible for a moment and know me. Pray do not say any more against it: my heart is set on being with him."

Mr. Pilgrim gave way, and Janet, having sent for her mother and put off her bonnet and shawl, returned to take her place by the side of her husband's bed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Day after day, with only short intervals of rest, Janet kept her place in that sad chamber. No wonder the sick-room and the lazaretto have so often been a refuge from the tossings of intellectual doubt—a place of repose for the worn and wounded

spirit. Here is a duty about which all creeds and all philosophies are at one: here, at least, the conscience will not be dogged by doubt, the benign impulse will not be checked by adverse theory: here you may begin to act without settling one preliminary question. To moisten the sufferer's parched lips through the long night-watches, to bear up the drooping head, to lift the helpless limbs, to divine the want that can find no utterance beyond the feeble motion of the hand or beseeching glance of the eye—these are offices that demand no self-questionings, no casuistry, no assent to propositions, no weighing of consequences. Within the four walls where the stir and glare of the world are shut out, and every voice is subdued, where a human being lies prostrate, thrown on the tender mercies of his fellow—the moral relation of man to man is reduced to its utmost clearness and simplicity: bigotry cannot confuse it, theory cannot pervert it, passion, awed into quiescence, can neither pollute nor perturb it. As we bend over the sick-bed, all the forces of our nature rush toward the channels of pity, of patience, and of love, and sweep down the miserable choking drift of our quarrels, our debates, our would-be wisdom, and our clamorous selfish desires. This blessing of serene freedom from the importunities of opinion lies in all simple direct acts of mercy, and is one source of that sweet calm which is often felt by the watcher in the sick-room, even when the duties there are of a hard and terrible kind.

Something of that benign result was felt by Janet during her tendance in her husband's chamber. When the first heart-piercing hours were over—when her horror at his delirium was no longer fresh—she began to be conscious of her relief from the burthen of decision as to her future course. The question that agitated her, about returning to her husband, had been solved in a moment; and this illness, after all, might be the herald of another blessing, just as that dreadful midnight when she stood an outcast in cold and darkness had been followed by the dawn of a new hope. Robert would get better, this illness might alter him; he would be a long time feeble, needing help, walking with a crutch, perhaps. She would wait on him with such tenderness, such all-forgiving

love, that the old harshness and cruelty must melt away forever under the heart-sunshine she would pour around him. Her bosom heaved at the thought, and delicious tears fell. Janet's was a nature in which hatred and revenge could find no place; the long bitter years drew half their bitterness from her ever-living remembrance of the too short years of love that went before; and the thought that her husband would ever put her hand to his lips again, and recall the days when they sat on the grass together, and he laid scarlet poppies on her black hair, and called her his gypsy queen, seemed to send a tide of loving oblivion over all the harsh and stony space they had traversed since. The Divine Love that had already shone upon her would be with her; she would lift up her soul continually for help; Mr. Tryan, she knew, would pray for her. If she felt herself failing, she would confess it to him at once; if her feet began to slip, there was that stay for her to cling to. Oh, she could never be drawn back into that cold damp vault of sin and despair again; she had felt the morning sun, she had tasted the sweet pure air of trust and penitence and submission.

These were the thoughts passing through Janet's mind as she hovered about her husband's bed, and these were the hopes she poured out to Mr. Tryan when he called to see her. It was so evident that they were strengthening her in her new struggle—they shed such a glow of calm enthusiasm over her face as she spoke of them—that Mr. Tryan could not bear to throw on them the chill of premonitory doubts, though a previous conversation he had had with Mr. Pilgrim had convinced him that there was not the faintest probability of Dempster's recovery. Poor Janet did not know the significance of the changing symptoms, and when, after the lapse of a week, the delirium began to lose some of its violence, and to be interrupted by longer and longer intervals of stupor, she tried to think that these might be steps on the way to recovery, and she shrank from questioning Mr. Pilgrim lest he should confirm the fears that began to get predominance in her mind. But before many days were past, he thought it right not to allow her to blind herself any longer. One day—it was just about noon, when bad news always seems most sickening—he

led her from her husband's chamber into the opposite drawing-room, where Mrs. Raynor was sitting, and said to her, in that low tone of sympathetic feeling which sometimes gave a sudden air of gentleness to this rough man—

"My dear Mrs. Dempster, it is right in these cases, you know, to be prepared for the worst. I think I shall be saving you pain by preventing you from entertaining any false hopes, and Mr. Dempster's state is now such that I fear we must consider recovery impossible. The affection of the brain might not have been hopeless, but, you see, there is a terrible complication; and I am grieved to say the broken limb is mortifying."

Janet listened with a sinking heart. That future of love and forgiveness would never come, then: he was going out of her sight forever, where her pity could never reach him. She turned cold, and trembled.

"But do you think he will die," she said, "without ever coming to himself? without ever knowing me?"

"One cannot say that with certainty. It is not impossible that the cerebral oppression may subside, and that he may become conscious. If there is anything you would wish to be said or done in that case, it would be well to be prepared. I should think," Mr. Pilgrim continued, turning to Mrs. Raynor, "Mr. Dempster's affairs are likely to be in order—his will is . . . "

"Oh, I wouldn't have him troubled about those things," interrupted Janet, "he has no relations but quite distant ones —no one but me. I wouldn't take up the time with that. I only want to . . ."

She was unable to finish; she felt her sobs rising, and left the room. "O God," she said, inwardly, "is not Thy love greater than mine? Have mercy on him! have mercy on him!"

This happened on Wednesday, ten days after the fatal accident. By the following Sunday, Dempster was in a state of rapidly increasing prostration; and when Mr. Pilgrim, who, in turn with his assistant, had slept in the house from the beginning, came in, about half-past ten, as usual, he scarcely believed that the feebly struggling life would last out till

morning. For the last few days he had been administering stimulants to relieve the exhaustion which had succeeded the alternations of delirium and stupor. This slight office was all that now remained to be done for the patient; so at eleven o'clock Mr. Pilgrim went to bed, having given directions to the nurse, and desired her to call him if any change took place, or if Mrs. Dempster desired his presence.

Janet could not be persuaded to leave the room. She was yearning and watching for a moment in which her husband's eyes would rest consciously upon her, and he would know that she had forgiven him.

How changed he was since that terrible Monday, nearly a fortnight ago! He lay motionless, but for the irregular breathing that stirred his broad chest and thick muscular neck. His features were no longer purple and swollen; they were pale, sunken, and haggard. A cold perspiration stood in beads on the protuberant forehead, and on the wasted hands stretched motionless on the bed-clothes. It was better to see the hands so, than convulsively picking the air, as they had been a week ago.

Janet sat on the edge of the bed through the long hours of candle-light, watching the unconscious half-closed eyes, wiping the perspiration from the brow and cheeks, and keeping her left hand on the cold unanswering right hand that lay beside her on the bed-clothes. She was almost as pale as her dying husband, and there were dark lines under her eyes, for this was the third night since she had taken off her clothes; but the eager straining gaze of her dark eyes, and the acute sensibility that lay in every line about her mouth, made a strange contrast with the blank unconsciousness and emaciated animalism of the face she was watching.

There was profound stillness in the house. She heard no sound but her husband's breathing and the ticking of the watch on the mantelpiece. The candle, placed high up, shed a soft light down on the one object she cared to see. There was a smell of brandy in the room; it was given to her husband from time to time; but this smell, which at first had produced in her a faint shuddering sensation, was now becoming indifferent to her: she did not even perceive it; she was

too unconscious of herself to feel either temptations or accusations. She only felt that the husband of her youth was dying; far, far out of her reach, as if she were standing helpless on the shore, while he was sinking in the black storm-waves; she only yearned for one moment in which she might satisfy the deep forgiving pity of her soul by one look of love, one word of tenderness.

Her sensations and thoughts were so persistent that she could not measure the hours, and it was a surprise to her when the nurse put out the candle, and let in the faint morning light. Mrs. Raynor, anxious about Janet, was already up, and now brought in some fresh coffee for her; and Mr. Pilgrim having awaked, had hurried on his clothes, and was come in to see how Dempster was.

This change from candle-light to morning, this recommencement of the same round of things that had happened yesterday, was a discouragement rather than a relief to Janet. She was more conscious of her chill weariness; the new light thrown on her husband's face seemed to reveal the still work that death had been doing through the night; she felt her last lingering hope that he would ever know her again forsake her.

But now, Mr. Pilgrim, having felt the pulse, was putting some brandy in a teaspoon between Dempster's lips; the brandy went down, and his breathing became freer. Janet noticed the change, and her heart beat faster as she leaned forward to watch him. Suddenly a slight movement, like the passing away of a shadow, was visible in his face, and he opened his eyes full on Janet.

It was almost like meeting him again on the resurrection morning, after the night of the grave.

"Robert, do you know me?"

He kept his eyes fixed on her, and there was a faintly perceptible motion of the lips, as if he wanted to speak.

But the moment of speech was forever gone—the moment for asking pardon of her, if he wanted to ask it. Could he read the full forgiveness that was written in her eyes? She never knew; for, as she was bending to kiss him, the thick veil of death fell between them, and her lips touched a corpse.

CHAPTER XXV.

The faces looked very hard and unmoved that surrounded Dempster's grave, while old Mr. Crewe read the burial-service in his low, broken voice. The pall-bearers were such men as Mr. Pittman, Mr. Lowme, and Mr. Budd—men whom Dempster had called his friends while he was in life; and worldly faces never look so worldly as at a funeral. They have the same effect of grating incongruity as the sound of a coarse voice breaking the solemn silence of night.

The one face that had sorrow in it was covered by a thick crape-veil, and the sorrow was suppressed and silent. No one knew how deep it was; for the thought in most of her neighbors' minds was, that Mrs. Dempster could hardly have had better fortune than to lose a bad husband who had left her the compensation of a good income. They found it difficult to conceive that her husband's death could be felt by her otherwise than as a deliverance. The person who was most thoroughly convinced that Janet's grief was deep and real, was Mr. Pilgrim, who in general was not at all weakly given to a belief in disinterested feeling.

"That woman has a tender heart," he was frequently heard to observe in his morning rounds about this time. "I used to think there was a great deal of palaver in her, but you may depend upon it there's no pretence about her. If he'd been the kindest husband in the world she couldn't have felt more. There's a great deal of good in Mrs. Dempster—a great deal of good."

"*I* always said so," was Mrs. Lowme's reply, when he made the observation to her; "she was always so very full of pretty attentions to me when I was ill. But they tell me now she's turned Tryanite; if that's it we sha'n't agree again. It's very inconsistent in her, I think, turning round in that way, after being the foremost to laugh at the Tryanite cant, and especially in a woman of her habits; she should cure herself of *them* before she pretends to be over-religious."

"Well, I think she means to cure herself, do you know,"

said Mr. Pilgrim, whose good-will toward Janet was just now quite above that temperate point at which he could indulge his feminine patients with a little judicious detraction. "I feel sure she has not taken any stimulants all through her husband's illness; and she has been constantly in the way of them. I can see she sometimes suffers a good deal of depression for want of them—it shows all the more resolution in her. Those cures are rare; but I've known them happen sometimes with people of strong will."

Mrs. Lowme took an opportunity of retailing Mr. Pilgrim's conversation to Mrs. Phipps, who, as a victim of Pratt and plethora, could rarely enjoy that pleasure at first-hand. Mrs. Phipps was a woman of decided opinions, though of wheezy utterance.

"For my part," she remarked, "I'm glad to hear there's any likelihood of improvement in Mrs. Dempster, but I think the way things have turned out seems to show that she was more to blame than people thought she was; else, why should she feel so much about her husband? And Dempster, I understand, has left his wife pretty nearly all his property to do as she likes with; *that* isn't behaving like such a very bad husband. I don't believe Mrs. Dempster can have had so much provocation as they pretended. I've known husbands who've laid plans for tormenting their wives when they're underground—tying up their money and hindering them from marrying again. Not that *I* should ever wish to marry again; I think one husband in one's life is enough in all conscience"; —here she threw a fiery glance at the amiable Mr. Phipps, who was innocently delighting himself with the *facetiæ* in the *Rotherby Guardian*, and thinking the editor must be a droll fellow—"but it's aggravating to be tied up in that way. Why, they say Mrs. Dempster will have as good as six hundred a year at least. A fine thing for her, that was a poor girl without a farthing to her fortune. It's well if she doesn't make ducks and drakes of it somehow."

Mrs. Phipps's view of Janet, however, was far from being the prevalent one in Milby. Even neighbors who had no strong personal interest in her, could hardly see the noble-looking woman in her widow's dress, with a sad sweet gravity

in her face, and not be touched with fresh admiration for her —and not feel, at least vaguely, that she had entered on a new life in which it was a sort of desecration to allude to the painful past. And the old friends who had a real regard for her, but whose cordiality had been repelled or chilled of late years, now came round her with hearty demonstrations of affection. Mr. Jerome felt that his happiness had a substantial addition now he could once more call on that "nice little woman Mrs. Dempster," and think of her with rejoicing instead of sorrow. The Pratts lost no time in returning to the footing of old-established friendship with Janet and her mother; and Miss Pratt felt it incumbent on her, on all suitable occasions, to deliver a very emphatic approval of the remarkable strength of mind she understood Mrs. Dempster to be exhibiting. The Miss Linnets were eager to meet Mr. Tryan's wishes by greeting Janet as one who was likely to be a sister in religious feeling and good works; and Mrs. Linnet was so agreeably surprised by the fact that Dempster had left his wife the money "in that handsome way, to do what she liked with it," that she even included Dempster himself, and his villanous discovery of the flaw in her title to Pye's Croft, in her magnanimous oblivion of past offences. She and Mrs. Jerome agreed over a friendly cup of tea that there were "a many husbands as was very fine spoken an' all that, an' yet all the while kep' a will locked up from you, as tied you up as tight as anything. I assure *you*," Mrs. Jerome continued, dropping her voice in a confidential manner, "I know no more to this day about Mr. Jerome's will, nor the child as is unborn. I've no fears about a income—I'm well aware Mr. Jerome 'ud niver leave me stret for that; but I should like to hev a thousand or two at my own disposial; it makes a widow a deal more looked on."

Perhaps this ground of respect to widows might not be entirely without its influence on the Milby mind, and might do something toward conciliating those more aristocratic acquaintances of Janet's, who would otherwise have been inclined to take the severest view of her apostasy toward Evangelicalism. Errors look so very ugly in persons of small means—one feels they are taking quite a liberty in going astray, whereas peo-

ple of fortune may naturally indulge in a few delinquencies. "They've got the money for it," as the girl said of her mistress who had made herself ill with pickled salmon. However it may have been, there was not an acquaintance of Janet's, in Milby, that did not offer her civilities in the early days of her widowhood. Even the severe Mrs. Phipps was not an exception; for heaven knows what would become of our sociality if we never visited people we speak ill of: we should live, like Egyptian hermits, in crowded solitude.

Perhaps the attentions most grateful to Janet were those of her old friend Mrs. Crewe, whose attachment to her favorite proved quite too strong for any resentment she might be supposed to feel on the score of Mr. Tryan. The little deaf old lady couldn't do without her accustomed visitor, whom she had seen grow up from child to woman, always so willing to chat with her and tell her all the news, though she was deaf; while other people thought it tiresome to shout in her ear, and irritated her by recommending ear-trumpets of various construction.

All this friendliness was very precious to Janet. She was conscious of the aid it gave her in the self-conquest which was the blessing she prayed for with every fresh morning. The chief strength of her nature lay in her affection, which colored all the rest of her mind: it gave a personal sisterly tenderness to her acts of benevolence; it made her cling with tenacity to every object that had once stirred her kindly emotions. Alas! it was unsatisfied, wounded affection that had made her trouble greater than she could bear. And now there was no check to the full flow of that plenteous current in her nature—no gnawing secret anguish—no overhanging terror—no inward shame. Friendly faces beamed on her; she felt that friendly hearts were approving her, and wishing her well, and that mild sunshine of good-will fell beneficently on her new hopes and efforts, as the clear shining after rain falls on the tender leaf-buds of spring, and wins them from promise to fulfilment.

And she needed these secondary helps, for her wrestling with her past self was not always easy. The strong emotions from which the life of a human being receives a new bias, win their victory as the sea wins his: though their advance may

be sure, they will often, after a mightier wave than usual, seem to roll back so far as to lose all the ground they had made. Janet showed the strong bent of her will by taking every outward precaution against the occurrence of a temptation. Her mother was now her constant companion, having shut up her little dwelling and come to reside in Orchard Street; and Janet gave all dangerous keys into her keeping, entreating her to lock them away in some secret place. Whenever the too well-known depression and craving threatened her, she would seek a refuge in what had always been her purest enjoyment—in visiting one of her poor neighbors, in carrying some food or comfort to a sick-bed, in cheering with her smile some of the familiar dwellings up the dingy back lanes. But the great source of courage, the great help to perseverance, was the sense that she had a friend and teacher in Mr. Tryan: she could confess her difficulties to him; she knew he prayed for her; she had always before her the prospect of soon seeing him, and hearing words of admonition and comfort, that came to her charged with a divine power such as she had never found in human words before.

So the time passed, till it was far on in May, nearly a month after her husband's death, when, as she and her mother were seated peacefully at breakfast in the dining-room, looking through the open window at the old-fashioned garden, where the grass-plot was now whitened with apple-blossoms, a letter was brought in for Mrs. Raynor.

"Why, there's the Thurston post-mark on it," she said. "It must be about your Aunt Anna. Ah, so it is, poor thing! she's been taken worse this last day or two, and has asked them to send for me. That dropsy is carrying her off at last, I dare say. Poor thing! it will be a happy release. I must go, my dear—she's your father's last sister—though I am sorry to leave you. However, perhaps I shall not have to stay more than a night or two."

Janet looked distressed as she said, "Yes, you must go, mother. But I don't know what I shall do without you. I think I shall run in to Mrs. Pettifer, and ask her to come and stay with me while you're away. I'm sure she will."

At twelve o'clock, Janet, having seen her mother in the

coach that was to carry her to Thurston, called, on her way back, at Mrs. Pettifer's, but found, to her great disappointment, that her old friend was gone out for the day. So she wrote on a leaf of her pocket-book an urgent request that Mrs. Pettifer would come and stay with her while her mother was away; and, desiring the servant-girl to give it to her mistress as soon as she came home, walked on to the Vicarage to sit with Mrs. Crewe, thinking to relieve in this way the feeling of desolateness and undefined fear that was taking possession of her on being left alone for the first time since that great crisis in her life. And Mrs. Crewe, too, was not at home!

Janet, with a sense of discouragement for which she rebuked herself as childish, walked sadly home again; and when she entered the vacant dining-room, she could not help bursting into tears. It is such vague undefinable states of susceptibility as this—states of excitement or depression, half mental, half physical—that determine many a tragedy in women's lives. Janet could scarcely eat anything at her solitary dinner: she tried to fix her attention on a book in vain; she walked about the garden, and felt the very sunshine melancholy.

Between four and five o'clock, old Mr. Pittman called, and joined her in the garden, where she had been sitting for some time under one of the great apple-trees, thinking how Robert, in his best moods, used to take little Mamsey to look at the cucumbers, or to see the Alderney cow with its calf in the paddock. The tears and sobs had come again at these thoughts; and when Mr. Pittman approached her, she was feeling languid and exhausted. But the old gentleman's sight and sensibility were obtuse, and, to Janet's satisfaction, he showed no consciousness that she was in grief.

"I have a task to impose upon you, Mrs. Dempster," he said, with a certain toothless pomposity habitual to him: "I want you to look over those letters again in Dempster's bureau, and see if you can find one from Poole about the mortgage on those houses at Dingley. It will be worth twenty pounds, if you can find it; and I don't know where it can be, if it isn't among those letters in the bureau. I've looked everywhere at the office for it. I'm going home now, but I'll call again

to-morrow, if you'll be good enough to look in the mean time."

Janet said she would look directly, and turned with Mr. Pittman into the house. But the search would take her some time, so he bade her good-by, and she went at once to a bureau which stood in a small back room, where Dempster used sometimes to write letters and receive people who came on business out of office hours. She had looked through the contents of the bureau more than once; but to-day, on removing the last bundle of letters from one of the compartments, she saw what she had never seen before, a small nick in the wood, made in the shape of a thumb-nail, evidently intended as a means of pushing aside the movable back of the compartment. In her examination hitherto she had not found such a letter as Mr. Pittman had described—perhaps there might be more letters behind this slide. She pushed it back at once, and saw—no letters, but a small spirit-decanter, half full of pale brandy, Dempster's habitual drink.

An impetuous desire shook Janet through all her members; it seemed to master her with the inevitable force of strong fumes that flood our senses before we are aware. Her hand was on the decanter; pale and excited, she was lifting it out of its niche, when, with a start and a shudder, she dashed it to the ground, and the room was filled with the odor of the spirit. Without staying to shut up the bureau, she rushed out of the room, snatched up her bonnet and mantle which lay in the dining-room, and hurried out of the house.

Where should she go? In what place would this demon that had re-entered her be scared back again? She walked rapidly along the street in the direction of the church. She was soon at the gate of the churchyard; she passed through it, and made her way across the graves to a spot she knew—a spot where the turf had been stirred not long before, where a tomb was to be erected soon. It was very near the church wall, on the side which now lay in deep shadow, quite shut out from the rays of the westering sun by a projecting buttress.

Janet sat down on the ground. It was a sombre spot. A thick hedge, surmounted by elm-trees, was in front of her; a

projecting buttress on each side. But she wanted to shut out even these objects. Her thick crape veil was down; but she closed her eyes behind it, and pressed her hands upon them. She wanted to summon up the vision of the past; she wanted to lash the demon out of her soul with the stinging memories of the bygone misery; she wanted to renew the old horror and the old anguish, that she might throw herself with the more desperate clinging energy at the foot of the cross, where the Divine Sufferer would impart divine strength. She tried to recall those first bitter moments of shame, which were like the shuddering discovery of the leper that the dire taint is upon him; the deeper and deeper lapse; the on-coming of settled despair; the awful moments by the bedside of her self-maddened husband. And then she tried to live through, with a remembrance made more vivid by that contrast, the blessed hours of hope and joy and peace that had come to her of late, since her whole soul had been bent toward the attainment of purity and holiness.

But now, when the paroxysm of temptation was past, dread and despondency began to thrust themselves, like cold heavy mists, between her and the heaven to which she wanted to look for light and guidance. The temptation would come again—that rush of desire might overmaster her the next time—she would slip back again into that deep slimy pit from which she had once been rescued, and there might be no deliverance for her more. Her prayers did not help her, for fear predominated over trust; she had no confidence that the aid she sought would be given; the idea of her future fall had grasped her mind too strongly. Alone, in this way, she was powerless. If she could see Mr. Tryan, if she could confess all to him, she might gather hope again. She *must* see him; she must go to him.

Janet rose from the ground, and walked away with a quick resolved step. She had been seated there a long while, and the sun had already sunk. It was late for her to walk to Paddiford and go to Mr. Tryan's, where she had never called before; but there was no other way of seeing him that evening, and she could not hesitate about it. She walked toward a footpath through the fields, which would take her to Paddi-

ford without obliging her to go through the town. The way was rather long, but she preferred it, because it left less probability of her meeting acquaintances, and she shrank from having to speak to any one.

The evening red had nearly faded by the time Janet knocked at Mrs. Wagstaff's door. The good woman looked surprised to see her at that hour; but Janet's mourning weeds and the painful agitation of her face quickly brought the second thought, that some urgent trouble had sent her there.

"Mr. Tryan's just come in," she said. "If you'll step into the parlor, I'll go up and tell him you're here. He seemed very tired and poorly."

At another time Janet would have felt distress at the idea that she was disturbing Mr. Tryan when he required rest; but now her need was too great for that: she could feel nothing but a sense of coming relief, when she heard his step on the stair and saw him enter the room.

He went toward her with a look of anxiety, and said, "I fear something is the matter. I fear you are in trouble."

Then poor Janet poured forth her sad tale of temptation and despondency; and even while she was confessing she felt half her burthen removed. The act of confiding in human sympathy, the consciousness that a fellow-being was listening to her with patient pity, prepared her soul for that stronger leap by which faith grasps the idea of the Divine sympathy. When Mr. Tryan spoke words of consolation and encouragement, she could now believe the message of mercy; the waterfloods that had threatened to overwhelm her rolled back again, and life once more spread its heaven-covered space before her. She had been unable to pray alone; but now his prayer bore her own soul along with it, as the broad tongue of flame carries upward in its vigorous leap the little flickering fire that could hardly keep alight by itself.

But Mr. Tryan was anxious that Janet should not linger out at this late hour. When he saw that she was calmed, he said: "I will walk home with you now; we can talk on the way." But Janet's mind was now sufficiently at liberty for her to notice the signs of feverish weariness in his appearance, and she would not hear of causing him any further fatigue.

"No, no," she said, earnestly, "you will pain me very much —indeed you will, by going out again to-night on my account. There is no real reason why I should not go alone." And when he persisted, fearing that for her to be seen out so late alone might excite remark, she said imploringly, with a half sob in her voice: "What should I—what would others like me do, if you went from us? *Why* will you not think more of that, and take care of yourself?"

He had often had that appeal made to him before, but to-night —from Janet's lips—it seemed to have a new force for him, and he gave way. At first, indeed, he only did so on condition that she would let Mrs. Wagstaff go with her; but Janet had determined to walk home alone. She preferred solitude; she wished not to have her present feelings distracted by any conversation.

So she went out into the dewy starlight; and as Mr. Tryan turned away from her, he felt a stronger wish than ever that his fragile life might last out for him to see Janet's restoration thoroughly established—to see her no longer fleeing, struggling, clinging up the steep sides of a precipice whence she might be any moment hurled back into the depths of despair, but walking firmly on the level ground of habit. He inwardly resolved that nothing but a peremptory duty should ever take him from Milby—that he would not cease to watch over her until life forsook him.

Janet walked on quickly till she turned into the fields; then she slackened her pace a little, enjoying the sense of solitude which a few hours before had been intolerable to her. The Divine Presence did not now seem far off, where she had not wings to reach it; prayer itself seemed superfluous in those moments of calm trust. The temptation which had so lately made her shudder before the possibilities of the future, was now a source of confidence; for had she not been delivered from it? Had not rescue come in the extremity of danger? Yes; Infinite Love was caring for her. She felt like a little child whose hand is firmly grasped by its father, as its frail limbs make their way over the rough ground; if it should stumble, the father will not let it go.

That walk in the dewy starlight remained forever in Janet's

memory as one of those baptismal epochs, when the soul, dipped in the sacred waters of joy and peace, rises from them with new energies, with more unalterable longings.

When she reached home she found Mrs. Pettifer there, anxious for her return. After thanking her for coming, Janet only said, "I have been to Mr. Tryan's; I wanted to speak to him"; and then remembering how she had left the bureau and papers, she went into the back room, where, apparently, no one had been since she quitted it; for there lay the fragments of glass, and the room was still full of the hateful odor. How feeble and miserable the temptation seemed to her at this moment! She rang for Kitty to come and pick up the fragments and rub the floor, while she herself replaced the papers and locked up the bureau.

The next morning when seated at breakfast with Mrs. Pettifer, Janet said—

"What a dreary, unhealthy-looking place that is where Mr. Tryan lives! I'm sure it must be very bad for him to live there. Do you know, all this morning, since I've been awake, I've been turning over a little plan in my mind. I think it a charming one—all the more, because *you* are concerned in it."

"Why, what can that be?"

"You know that house on the Redhill road they call Holly Mount; it is shut up now. That is Robert's house; at least, it is mine now, and it stands on one of the healthiest spots about here. Now, I've been settling in my own mind, that if a dear good woman of my acquaintance, who knows how to make a home as comfortable and cosey as a bird's nest, were to take up her abode there, and have Mr. Tryan as a lodger, she would be doing one of the most useful deeds in all her useful life."

"You've such a way of wrapping up things in pretty words. You must speak plainer."

"In plain words, then, I should like to settle you at Holly Mount. You would not have to pay any more rent than where you are, and it would be twenty times pleasanter for you than living up that passage where you see nothing but a brick wall. And then, as it is not far from Paddiford, I think Mr. Tryan might be persuaded to lodge with you, instead of in that musty

house, among dead cabbages and smoky cottages. I know you would like to have him live with you, and you would be such a mother to him."

"To be sure I should like it; it would be the finest thing in the world for me. But there'll be furniture wanted. My little bit of furniture won't fill that house."

"Oh, I can put some in out of this house; it is too full; and we can buy the rest. They tell me I'm to have more money than I shall know what to do with."

"I'm almost afraid," said Mrs. Pettifer, doubtfully, "Mr. Tryan will hardly be persuaded. He's been talked to so much about leaving that place; and he always said he must stay there—he must be among the people, and there was no other place for him in Paddiford. It cuts me to the heart to see him getting thinner and thinner, and I've noticed him quite short o' breath sometimes. Mrs. Linnet will have it, Mrs. Wagstaff half poisons him with bad cooking. I don't know about that, but he can't have many comforts. I expect he'll break down all of a sudden some day, and never be able to preach any more."

"Well, I shall try my skill with him by and by. I shall be very cunning, and say nothing to him till all is ready. You and I and mother, when she comes home, will set to work directly and get the house in order, and then we'll get you snugly settled in it. I shall see Mr. Pittman to-day, and I will tell him what I mean to do. I shall say I wish to have you for a tenant. Everybody knows I'm very fond of that naughty person, Mrs. Pettifer; so it will seem the most natural thing in the world. And then I shall by and by point out to Mr. Tryan that he will be doing you a service as well as himself by taking up his abode with you. I think I can prevail upon him; for last night, when he was quite bent on coming out into the night air, I persuaded him to give it up."

"Well, I only hope you may, my dear. I don't desire anything better than to do something toward prolonging Mr. Tryan's life, for I've sad fears about him."

"Don't speak of them—I can't bear to think of them. We will only think about getting the house ready. We shall be as busy as bees. How we shall want mother's clever fingers!

I know the room upstairs that will just do for Mr. Tryan's study. There shall be no seats in it except a very easy chair and a very easy sofa, so that he shall be obliged to rest himself when he comes home."

CHAPTER XXVI.

That was the last terrible crisis of temptation Janet had to pass through. The good-will of her neighbors, the helpful sympathy of the friends who shared her religious feelings, the occupations suggested to her by Mr. Tryan, concurred, with her strong spontaneous impulses toward works of love and mercy, to fill up her days with quiet social intercourse and charitable exertion. Besides, her constitution, naturally healthy and strong, was every week tending, with gathering force of habit, to recover its equipoise, and set her free from those physical solicitations which the smallest habitual vice always leaves behind it. The prisoner feels where the iron has galled him, long after his fetters have been loosed.

There were always neighborly visits to be paid and received; and as the months wore on, increasing familiarity with Janet's present self began to efface, even from minds as rigid as Mrs. Phipps's, the unpleasant impressions that had been left by recent years. Janet was recovering the popularity which her beauty and sweetness of nature had won for her when she was a girl; and popularity, as every one knows, is the most complex and self-multiplying of echoes. Even anti-Tryanite prejudice could not resist the fact that Janet Dempster was a changed woman—changed as the dusty, bruised, and sun-withered plant is changed when the soft rains of heaven have fallen on it—and that this change was due to Mr. Tryan's influence. The last lingering sneers against the Evangelical curate began to die out; and though much of the feeling that had prompted them remained behind, there was an intimidating consciousness that the expression of such feeling would not be effective—jokes of that sort had ceased to tickle the Milby mind. Even Mr. Budd and Mr. Tomlinson, when they

saw Mr. Tryan passing pale and worn along the street, had a secret sense that this man was somehow not that very natural and comprehensible thing, a humbug—that, in fact, it was impossible to explain him from the stomach-and-pocket point of view. Twist and stretch their theory as they might, it would not fit Mr. Tryan; and so, with that remarkable resemblance as to mental processes which may frequently be observed to exist between plain men and philosophers, they concluded that the less they said about him the better.

Among all Janet's neighborly pleasures, there was nothing she liked better than to take an early tea at the White House, and to stroll with Mr. Jerome round the old-fashioned garden and orchard. There was endless matter for talk between her and the good old man, for Janet had that genuine delight in human fellowship which gives an interest to all personal details that come warm from truthful lips; and, besides, they had a common interest in good-natured plans for helping their poorer neighbors. One great object of Mr. Jerome's charities was, as he often said, "to keep industrious men an' women off the parish. I'd rether give ten shillin' an' help a man to stan' on his own legs, nor pay half-a-crown to buy him a parish crutch; it's the ruination on him if he once goes to the parish. I've see'd many a time, if you help a man wi' a present in a neeborly way, it sweetens his blood—he thinks it kind on you; but the parish shillin's turn it sour—he niver thinks 'em enough." In illustration of this opinion Mr. Jerome had a large store of details about such persons as Jim Hardy, the coal-carrier, "as lost his hoss," and Sally Butts, "as hed to sell her mangle, though she was as decent a woman as need to be"; to the hearing of which details Janet seriously inclined; and you would hardly desire to see a prettier picture than the kind-faced, white-haired old man telling these fragments of his simple experience as he walked, with shoulders slightly bent, among the moss-roses and espalier apple-trees, while Janet in her widow's cap, her dark eyes bright with interest, went listening by his side, and little Lizzie, with her nankin bonnet hanging down her back, toddled on before them. Mrs. Jerome usually declined these lingering strolls, and often observed, "I niver see the like to Mr. Jerome when he's got

Mrs. Dempster to talk to; it sinnifies nothin' to him whether we've tea at four or at five o'clock; he'd go on till six, if you'd let him alone—he's like off his head." However, Mrs. Jerome herself could not deny that Janet was a very pretty-spoken woman: "She al'ys says, she niver gets sich pikelets as mine nowhere; I know that very well—other folks buy 'em at shops—thick, unwholesome things, you might as well eat a sponge."

The sight of little Lizzie often stirred in Janet's mind a sense of the childlessness which had made a fatal blank in her life. She had fleeting thoughts that perhaps among her husband's distant relatives there might be some children whom she could help to bring up, some little girl whom she might adopt; and she promised herself one day or other to hunt out a second cousin of his—a married woman, of whom he had lost sight for many years.

But at present her hands and heart were too full for her to carry out that scheme. To her great disappointment, her project of settling Mrs. Pettifer at Holly Mount had been delayed by the discovery that some repairs were necessary in order to make the house habitable, and it was not till September had set in that she had the satisfaction of seeing her old friend comfortably installed, and the rooms destined for Mr. Tryan looking pretty and cosey to her heart's content. She had taken several of his chief friends into her confidence, and they were warmly wishing success to her plan for inducing him to quit poor Mrs. Wagstaff's dingy house and dubious cookery. That he should consent to some such change was becoming more and more a matter of anxiety to his hearers; for though no more decided symptoms were yet observable in him than increasing emaciation, a dry hacking cough, and an occasional shortness of breath, it was felt that the fulfilment of Mr. Pratt's prediction could not long be deferred, and that this obstinate persistence in labor and self-disregard must soon be peremptorily cut short by a total failure of strength. Any hopes that the influence of Mr. Tryan's father and sister would prevail on him to change his mode of life—that they would perhaps come to live with him, or that his sister at least might come to see him, and that the arguments which

had failed from other lips might be more persuasive from hers —were now quite dissipated. His father had lately had an attack of paralysis, and could not spare his only daughter's tendance. On Mr. Tryan's return from a visit to his father, Miss Linnet was very anxious to know whether his sister had not urged him to try change of air. From his answers she gathered that Miss Tryan wished him to give up his curacy and travel, or at least go to the south Devonshire coast.

"And why will you not do so?" Miss Linnet said; "you might come back to us well and strong, and have many years of usefulness before you."

"No," he answered quietly, "I think people attach more importance to such measures than is warranted. I don't see any good end that is to be served by going to die at Nice, instead of dying amongst one's friends and one's work. I cannot leave Milby—at least I will not leave it voluntarily."

But though he remained immovable on this point, he had been compelled to give up his afternoon service on the Sunday, and to accept Mr. Parry's offer of aid in the evening service, as well as to curtail his week-day labors; and he had even written to Mr. Prendergast to request that he would appoint another curate to the Paddiford district, on the understanding that the new curate should receive the salary, but that Mr. Tryan should co-operate with him as long as he was able. The hopefulness which is an almost constant attendant on consumption had not the effect of deceiving him as to the nature of his malady, or of making him look forward to ultimate recovery. He believed himself to be consumptive, and he had not yet felt any desire to escape the early death which he had for some time contemplated as probable. Even diseased hopes will take their direction from the strong habitual bias of the mind, and to Mr. Tryan death had for years seemed nothing else than the laying down of a burthen, under which he sometimes felt himself fainting. He was only sanguine about his powers of work: he flattered himself that what he was unable to do one week he should be equal to the next, and he would not admit that in desisting from any part of his labor, he was renouncing it permanently. He had lately delighted Mr. Jerome by accepting his long-proffered

loan of the "little chacenut horse"; and he found so much benefit from substituting constant riding exercise for walking, that he began to think he should soon be able to resume some of the work he had dropped.

That was a happy afternoon for Janet, when, after exerting herself busily for a week with her mother and Mrs. Pettifer, she saw Holly Mount looking orderly and comfortable from attic to cellar. It was an old red-brick house, with two gables in front, and two clipped holly-trees flanking the garden-gate; a simple, homely-looking place, that quiet people might easily get fond of; and now it was scoured and polished and carpeted and furnished so as to look really snug within. When there was nothing more to be done, Janet delighted herself with contemplating Mr. Tryan's study, first sitting down in the easy-chair, and then lying for a moment on the sofa, that she might have a keener sense of the repose he would get from those well-stuffed articles of furniture, which she had gone to Rotherby on purpose to choose.

"Now, mother," she said, when she had finished her survey, "you have done your work as well as any fairy-mother or godmother that ever turned a pumpkin into a coach and horses. You stay and have tea cosily with Mrs. Pettifer while I go to Mrs. Linnet's. I want to tell Mary and Rebecca the good news, that I've got the exciseman to promise that he will take Mrs. Wagstaff's lodgings when Mr. Tryan leaves. They'll be so pleased to hear it, because they thought he would make her poverty an objection to his leaving her."

"But, my dear child," said Mrs. Raynor, whose face, always calm, was now a happy one, "have a cup of tea with us first. You'll perhaps miss Mrs. Linnet's tea-time."

"No, I feel too excited to take tea yet. I'm like a child with a new baby-house. Walking in the air will do me good."

So she set out. Holly Mount was about a mile from that outskirt of Paddiford Common where Mrs. Linnet's house stood nestled among its laburnums, lilacs, and syringas. Janet's way thither lay for a little while along the high-road, and then led her into a deep-rutted lane, which wound through a flat tract of meadow and pasture, while in front lay smoky Paddiford, and away to the left the mother-town of Milby.

There was no line of silvery willows marking the course of a stream—no group of Scotch firs with their trunks reddening in the level sunbeams—nothing to break the flowerless monotony of grass and hedgerow but an occasional oak or elm, and a few cows sprinkled here and there. A very commonplace scene, indeed. But what scene was ever commonplace in the descending sunlight, when color has awakened from its noonday sleep, and the long shadows awe us like a disclosed presence? Above all, what scene is commonplace to the eye that is filled with serene gladness, and brightens all things with its own joy?

And Janet just now was very happy. As she walked along the rough lane with a buoyant step, a half-smile of innocent, kindly triumph played about her mouth. She was delighting beforehand in the anticipated success of her persuasive power, and for the time her painful anxiety about Mr. Tryan's health was thrown into abeyance. But she had not gone far along the lane before she heard the sound of a horse advancing at a walking pace behind her. Without looking back, she turned aside to make way for it between the ruts, and did not notice that for a moment it had stopped, and had then come on with a slightly quickened pace. In less than a minute she heard a well-known voice say, "Mrs. Dempster"; and, turning, saw Mr. Tryan close to her, holding his horse by the bridle. It seemed very natural to her that he should be there. Her mind was so full of his presence at that moment, that the actual sight of him was only like a more vivid thought, and she behaved, as we are apt to do when feeling obliges us to be genuine, with a total forgetfulness of polite forms. She only looked at him with a slight deepening of the smile that was already on her face. He said gently, "Take my arm"; and they walked on a little way in silence.

It was he that broke it. "You are going to Paddiford, I suppose?"

The question recalled Janet to the consciousness that this was an unexpected opportunity for beginning her work of persuasion, and that she was stupidly neglecting it.

"Yes," she said, "I was going to Mrs. Linnet's. I knew Mrs. Linnet would like to hear that our friend Mrs. Pet-

tifer is quite settled now in her new house. She is as fond of Mrs. Pettifer as I am—almost; I won't admit that any one loves her *quite* as well, for no one else has such good reason as I have. But now the dear woman wants a lodger, for you know she can't afford to live in so large a house by herself. But I knew when I persuaded her to go there that she would be sure to get one—she's such a comfortable creature to live with; and I didn't like her to spend all the rest of her days up that dull passage, being at every one's beck and call who wanted to make use of her."

"Yes," said Mr. Tryan, "I quite understand your feeling; I don't wonder at your strong regard for her."

"Well, but now I want her other friends to second me. There she is, with three rooms to let, ready furnished, everything in order; and I know some one, who thinks as well of her as I do, and who would be doing good all round—to every one that knows him, as well as to Mrs. Pettifer, if he would go to live with her. He would leave some uncomfortable lodgings, which another person is already coveting and would take immediately; and he would go to breathe pure air at Holly Mount, and gladden Mrs. Pettifer's heart by letting her wait on him; and comfort all his friends, who are quite miserable about him."

Mr. Tryan saw it all in a moment—he saw that it had all been done for his sake. He could not be sorry; he could not say no; he could not resist the sense that life had a new sweetness for him, and that he should like it to be prolonged a little—only a little, for the sake of feeling a stronger security about Janet. When she had finished speaking, she looked at him with a doubtful, inquiring glance. He was not looking at her; his eyes were cast downward; but the expression of his face encouraged her, and she said, in a half-playful tone of entreaty—

"You *will* go and live with her? I know you will. You will come back with me now and see the house."

He looked at her then, and smiled. There is an unspeakable blending of sadness and sweetness in the smile of a face sharpened and paled by slow consumption. That smile of Mr. Tryan's pierced poor Janet's heart: she felt in it at once

the assurance of grateful affection and the prophecy of coming death. Her tears rose; they turned round without speaking, and went back again along the lane.

CHAPTER XXVII.

In less than a week Mr. Tryan was settled at Holly Mount, and there was not one of his many attached hearers who did not sincerely rejoice at the event.

The autumn that year was bright and warm, and at the beginning of October, Mr. Walsh, the new curate, came. The mild weather, the relaxation from excessive work, and perhaps another benignant influence, had for a few weeks a visibly favorable effect on Mr. Tryan. At least he began to feel new hopes, which sometimes took the guise of new strength. He thought of the cases in which consumptive patients remain nearly stationary for years, without suffering so as to make their life burthensome to themselves or to others; and he began to struggle with a longing that it might be so with him. He struggled with it, because he felt it to be an indication that earthly affection was beginning to have too strong a hold on him, and he prayed earnestly for more perfect submission, and for a more absorbing delight in the Divine Presence as the chief good. He was conscious that he did not wish for prolonged life solely that he might reclaim the wanderers and sustain the feeble: he was conscious of a new yearning for those pure human joys which he had voluntarily and determinedly banished from his life—for a draught of that deep affection from which he had been cut off by a dark chasm of remorse. For now, that affection was within his reach; he saw it there, like a palm-shadowed well in the desert; he *could* not desire to die in sight of it.

And so the autumn rolled gently by in its "calm decay." Until November, Mr. Tryan continued to preach occasionally, to ride about visiting his flock, and to look in at his schools; but his growing satisfaction in Mr. Walsh as his successor saved him from too eager exertion and from worrying anxiety.

Janet was with him a great deal now, for she saw that he liked her to read to him in the lengthening evenings, and it became the rule for her and her mother to have tea at Holly Mount, where, with Mrs. Pettifer, and sometimes another friend or two, they brought Mr. Tryan the unaccustomed enjoyment of companionship by his own fireside.

Janet did not share his new hopes, for she was not only in the habit of hearing Mr. Pratt's opinion that Mr. Tryan could hardly stand out through the winter, but she also knew that it was shared by Dr. Madely of Rotherby, whom, at her request, he had consented to call in. It was not necessary or desirable to tell Mr. Tryan what was revealed by the stethoscope, but Janet knew the worst.

She felt no rebellion under this prospect of bereavement, but rather a quiet submissive sorrow. Gratitude that his influence and guidance had been given her, even if only for a little while—gratitude that she was permitted to be with him, to take a deeper and deeper impress from daily communion with him, to be something to him in these last months of his life, was so strong in her that it almost silenced regret. Janet had lived through the great tragedy of woman's life. Her keenest personal emotions had been poured forth in her early love—her wounded affection with its years of anguish—her agony of unavailing pity over that death-bed seven months ago. The thought of Mr. Tryan was associated for her with repose from that conflict of emotion, with trust in the unchangeable, with the influx of a power to subdue self. To have been assured of his sympathy, his teaching, his help, all through her life, would have been to her like a heaven already begun—a deliverance from fear and danger; but the time was not yet come for her to be conscious that the hold he had on her heart was any other than that of the heaven-sent friend who had come to her like the angel in the prison, and loosed her bonds, and led her by the hand till she could look back on the dreadful doors that had once closed her in.

Before November was over Mr. Tryan had ceased to go out. A new crisis had come on: the cough had changed its character, and the worst symptoms developed themselves so rapidly that Mr. Pratt began to think the end would arrive sooner

than he had expected. Janet became a constant attendant on him now, and no one could feel that she was performing anything but a sacred office. She made Holly Mount her home, and, with her mother and Mrs. Pettifer to help her, she filled the painful days and nights with every soothing influence that care and tenderness could devise. There were many visitors to the sick-room, led thither by venerating affection; and there could hardly be one who did not retain in after-years a vivid remembrance of the scene there—of the pale wasted form in the easy-chair (for he sat up to the last), of the gray eyes so full even yet of inquiring kindness, as the thin, almost transparent hand was held out to give the pressure of welcome; and of the sweet woman, too, whose dark watchful eyes detected every want, and who supplied the want with a ready hand.

There were others who would have had the heart and the skill to fill this place by Mr. Tryan's side, and who would have accepted it as an honor; but they could not help feeling that God had given it to Janet by a train of events which were too impressive not to shame all jealousies into silence.

That sad history which most of us know too well, lasted more than three months. He was too feeble and suffering for the last few weeks to see any visitors, but he still sat up through the day. The strange hallucinations of the disease which had seemed to take a more decided hold on him just at the fatal crisis, and had made him think he was perhaps getting better at the very time when death had begun to hurry on with more rapid movement, had now given way, and left him calmly conscious of the reality. One afternoon near the end of February, Janet was moving gently about the room, in the fire-lit dusk, arranging some things that would be wanted in the night. There was no one else in the room, and his eyes followed her as she moved with the firm grace natural to her, while the bright fire every now and then lit up her face, and gave an unusual glow to its dark beauty. Even to follow her in this way with his eyes was an exertion that gave a painful tension to his face; while *she* looked like an image of life and strength.

"Janet," he said presently, in his faint voice—he always

called her Janet now. In a moment she was close to him, bending over him. He opened his hand as he looked up at her, and she placed hers within it.

"Janet," he said again, "you will have a long while to live after I am gone."

A sudden pang of fear shot through her. She thought he felt himself dying, and she sank on her knees at his feet, holding his hand, while she looked up at him, almost breathless.

"But you will not feel the need of me as you have done. . . . You have a sure trust in God. . . . I shall not look for you in vain at the last."

"No . . . no . . . I shall be there . . . God will not forsake me."

She could hardly utter the words, though she was not weeping. She was waiting with trembling eagerness for anything else he might have to say.

"Let us kiss each other before we part."

She lifted up her face to his, and the full life-breathing lips met the wasted dying ones in a sacred kiss of promise.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It soon came—the blessed day of deliverance, the sad day of bereavement; and in the second week of March they carried him to the grave. He was buried as he had desired: there was no hearse, no mourning-coach; his coffin was borne by twelve of his humbler hearers, who relieved each other by turns. But he was followed by a long procession of mourning friends, women as well as men.

Slowly, amid deep silence, the dark stream passed along Orchard Street, where eighteen months before the Evangelical curate had been saluted with hootings and hisses. Mr. Jerome and Mr. Landor were the eldest pall-bearers; and behind the coffin, led by Mr. Tryan's cousin, walked Janet, in quiet submissive sorrow. She could not feel that he was quite gone from her; the unseen world lay so very near her—it held

all that had ever stirred the depths of anguish and joy within her.

It was a cloudy morning, and had been raining when they left Holly Mount; but as they walked, the sun broke out, and the clouds were rolling off in large masses when they entered the churchyard, and Mr. Walsh's voice was heard saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The faces were not hard at this funeral; the burial-service was not a hollow form. Every heart there was filled with the memory of a man who, through a self-sacrificing life and in a painful death, had been sustained by the faith which fills that form with breath and substance.

When Janet left the grave, she did not return to Holly Mount; she went to her home in Orchard Street, where her mother was waiting to receive her. She said quite calmly, "Let us walk round the garden, mother." And they walked round in silence, with their hands clasped together, looking at the golden crocuses bright in the spring sunshine. Janet felt a deep stillness within. She thirsted for no pleasure; she craved no worldly good. She saw the years to come stretch before her like an autumn afternoon, filled with resigned memory. Life to her could never more have any eagerness; it was a solemn service of gratitude and patient effort. She walked in the presence of unseen witnesses—of the Divine love that had rescued her, of the human love that waited for its eternal repose until it had seen her endure to the end.

Janet is living still. Her black hair is gray, and her step is no longer buoyant; but the sweetness of her smile remains, the love is not gone from her eyes; and strangers sometimes ask, Who is that noble-looking elderly woman that walks about holding a little boy by the hand? The little boy is the son of Janet's adopted daughter, and Janet in her old age has children about her knees, and loving young arms round her neck.

There is a simple gravestone in Milby Churchyard, telling that in this spot lie the remains of Edgar Tryan, for two years officiating curate at the Paddiford Chapel-of-Ease, in this parish. It is a meagre memorial, and tells you simply that the

man who lies there took upon him, faithfully or unfaithfully, the office of guide and instructor to his fellow-men.

But there is another memorial of Edgar Tryan, which bears a fuller record: it is Janet Dempster, rescued from self-despair, strengthened with divine hopes, and now looking back on years of purity and helpful labor. The man who has left such a memorial behind him must have been one whose heart beat with true compassion, and whose lips were moved by fervent faith.

THE END.

MEMOIR OF GEORGE ELIOT.

GEORGE ELIOT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Speaking of the contributions made to literature by her own sex, George Eliot, in a charming essay written in 1854, awards the palm of intellectual pre-eminence to the women of France. "They alone," says the great English author, "have had a vital influence on the development of literature. For in France alone the mind of woman has passed, like an electric current, through the language, making crisp and definite what is elsewhere heavy and blurred; in France alone, if the writings of women were swept away, a serious gap would be made in the national history."

The reason assigned by George Eliot for this literary superiority of Frenchwomen consists in their having had the courage of their sex. They thought and felt as women, and when they wrote, their books became the fullest expression of their womanhood. And by being true to themselves, by only seeking inspiration from their own life-experience, instead of servilely copying that of men, their letters and memoirs, their novels and pictures, have a distinct, nay, unique, value for the student of art and literature. Englishwomen, on the other hand, have not followed the spontaneous impulses of nature. They have not allowed free play to the peculiarly feminine element, preferring to mould their intellectual products on the masculine pattern. For that reason, says George Eliot, their writings are "usually an absurd exaggeration of the masculine style, like the swaggering gait of a bad actress in male attire."

This novel theory, concerning a specifically feminine manifestation of the intellect, is doubly curious when one compares it with Madame de Staël's famous saying, "*Le génie n'a pas de sexe.*" But an aphorism, however brilliant, usually contains only one half the truth, and there is every reason to think that women have already, and will much more largely, by-and-by, infuse into their works certain intellectual and emotional qualities which are essentially their own. Shall we, however, admit George Eliot's conclusion that Frenchwomen alone have hitherto shown any of this original bias? Several causes are mentioned by her in explanation of this exceptional merit. Among these causes there is one which would probably occur to every one who began to reflect on this subject. The influence of the "Salon" in developing and stimulating the finest feminine talents has long been recognized. In this school for women the gift of expression was carried to the utmost pitch of perfection. By their active co-operation in the discussion of the most vital subjects, thought became clear, luminous, and forcible; sentiment gained indescribable graces of refinement; and wit, with its brightest scintillations, lit up the sombre background of life.

But among other causes enumerated as accounting for that more spontaneous productivity of Frenchwomen, attributed to them by George Eliot, there is one which would probably have occurred to no other mind than hers, and which is too characteristic of her early scientific tendencies to be omitted. For according to her, the present superiority of Frenchwomen is mainly due to certain physiological peculiarities of the Gallic race. Namely, to the "small brain and vivacious temperament which permit the fragile system of woman to sustain the superlative activity requisite for intellectual creativeness," whereas "the larger brain and slower temperament of the English and Germans are in the womanly organization generally dreamy and passive. So that the *physique* of a woman may suffice as the substratum for a superior Gallic mind, but is too thin a soil for a superior Teutonic one."

So knotty and subtle a problem must be left to the scientist of the future to decide. Perhaps some promising young physiologist, profiting by the "George Henry Lewes Studentship"

founded by George Eliot, may some day satisfactorily elucidate this question. In the meanwhile it is at least gratifying to reflect that she does not deny the future possibilities of even English and German women. She admits that conditions might arise which in their case also would be favorable to the highest creative effort; conditions which would modify the existing state of things according to which, to speak in her own scientific phraseology: "The woman of large capacity can seldom rise beyond the absorption of ideas; her physical conditions refuse to support the energy required for spontaneous activity; the voltaic pile is not strong enough to produce crystallizations."

But was the author of 'Adam Bede' not herself destined to be a triumphant refutation of her theory? Or had those more favorable circumstances mentioned as vague possibilities already arisen in her case? Not that we believe, for that matter, in the superior claims of illustrious Frenchwomen. It is true George Eliot enumerates a formidable list of names. But on the whole we may boast of feminine celebrities that need not shrink from the comparison.

There is, of course, much truth in the great Englishwoman's generous praise of her French compeers. "Mme. de Sévigné remains," she says, "the single instance of a woman who is supreme in a class of literature which has engaged the ambition of men; Mme. Dacier still reigns the queen of bluestockings, though women have long studied Greek without shame; Mme. de Staël's name still rises to the lips when we are asked to mention a woman of great intellectual power; Mme. Roland is still the unrivalled type of the sagacious and sternly heroic yet lovable woman; George Sand is the unapproached artist who, to Jean Jacques' eloquence and deep sense of external nature, unites the clear delineation of character and the tragic depth of passion."

Shall we be forced to admit that the representative women of England cannot justly be placed on as high a level? Is it so certain that they, too, did not speak out of the fulness of their womanly natures? That they, too, did not feel the genuine need to express modes of thought and feeling peculiar to themselves, which men, if at all, had but inadequately expressed hitherto?

Was not Queen Elizabeth the best type of a female ruler, one whose keen penetration enabled her to choose her ministers with infallible judgment? Did not Fanny Burney distil the delicate aroma of girlhood in one of the most delightful of novels? Or what of Jane Austen, whose microscopic fidelity of observation has a well-nigh scientific accuracy, never equalled unless in the pages of the author we are writing of? Sir Walter Scott apparently recognized the eminently feminine inspiration of her writings, as he says: "That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is for me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now agoing; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the descriptions and the sentiment, is denied to me." Then turning to the Brontës, does not one feel the very heartbeats of womanhood in those powerful utterances that seem to spring from some central emotional energy? Again, does not Mrs. Browning occupy a unique place among poets? Is there not a distinctively womanly strain of emotion in the throbbing tides of her high-wrought melodious song? And, to come to George Eliot herself, will any one deny that, in the combination of sheer intellectual power with an unparalleled vision for the homely details of life, she takes precedence of all writers of this or any other country? To some extent this wonderful woman conforms to her own standard. She undoubtedly adds to the common fund of crystallized human experience, as literature might be called, something which is specifically feminine. But, on the other hand, her intellect excels precisely in those qualities habitually believed to be masculine, one of its chief characteristics consisting in the grasp of abstract philosophical ideas. This faculty, however, by no means impairs those instinctive processes of the imagination by which true artistic work is produced; George Eliot combining in an unusual degree the subtlest power of analysis with that happy gift of genius which enabled her to create such characters as Amos Barton, Hetty, Mrs. Poyser, Maggie, and Tom Tulliver, Godfrey Cass, and Caleb Garth, which seem to come fresh from the mould of

Nature itself. Indeed, she has hardly a rival among women in this power of objective imagination by which she throws her whole soul into natures of the most varied and opposite types, whereas George Sand only succeeds greatly when she is thoroughly in sympathy with her creations.

After George Eliot's eulogium of Frenchwomen, one feels tempted to institute a comparison between these two great contemporaries, who occupied the same leading position in their respective countries. But it will probably always remain a question of idiosyncrasy which of the two one is disposed to rank higher, George Eliot being the greatest realist, George Sand the greatest idealist, of her sex. The works of the French writer are, in fact, prose poems rather than novels. They are not studies of life, but life interpreted by the poet's vision. George Sand cannot give us a description of any scene in nature, of her own feelings, of a human character, without imparting to it some magical effect as of objects seen under the transfiguring influence of moonlight or storm clouds; whereas George Eliot loves to bathe her productions in the broad pitiless midday light, which leaves no room for illusion, but reveals all nature with uncompromising directness. The one has more of that primitive imagination which seizes on the elemental side of life — on the spectacle of the starry heavens or of Alpine solitudes, on the insurrection and tumult of human passion, on the shocks of revolution convulsing the social order — while the other possesses, in a higher degree, the acute intellectual perception for the orderly sequence of life, for that unchangeable round of toil which is the lot of the mass of men, and for the earth in its homelier aspects as it tells on our daily existence. In George Sand's finest work there is a sweet spontaneity, almost as if she were an oracle of Nature uttering automatically the divine message. But, on the other hand, when the inspiration forsakes her, she drifts along on a windy current of words, the fatal facility of her pen often beguiling the writer into vague diffuseness and unsubstantial declamation.

In this respect, also, our English novelist is the opposite of George Sand, for George Eliot invariably remains the master of her genius: indeed, she thoroughly fulfils Goethe's demand

that if you set up for an artist you must command art. This intellectual self-restraint never forsakes George Eliot, who always selects her means with a thorough knowledge of the ends to be attained. The radical difference in the genius of these two writers, to both of whom applies Mrs. Browning's apt appellation of "large-brained woman and large-hearted man," extends naturally to their whole tone of thought. George Sand is impassioned, turbulent, revolutionary, the spiritual daughter of Rousseau, with an enthusiastic faith in man's future destiny. George Eliot, contemplative, observant, instinctively conservative, her imagination dearly loving to do "a little Toryism on the sly," is as yet the sole outcome of the modern positive spirit in imaginative literature — the sole novelist who has incorporated in an artistic form some of the leading ideas of Comte, of Mazzini, and of Darwin. In fact, underlying all her art there is the same rigorous teaching of the inexorable laws which govern the life of man. The teaching that not liberty but duty is the condition of existence; the teaching of the incalculable effects of hereditary transmission, with the solemn responsibilities it involves; the teaching of the inherent sadness and imperfection in human nature, which render resignation the first virtue of man.

In fact, as a moral influence, George Eliot cannot so much be compared with George Sand, or with any other novelist of her generation, as with Carlyle. She had, indeed, a far more explicit ethical code to offer than the author of 'Sartor Resartus.' For though the immense force of the latter's personality, glowing through his writings, had a tonic effect in promoting a healthy moral tone, there was little of positive moral truth to be gathered from them. But the lessons which George Eliot would fain teach to men were most unmistakable in their bearing — the lessons of pitying love towards fellow-men; of sympathy with all human suffering; of unwavering faithfulness toward the social bond, consisting in the claims of race, of country, of family; of unflagging aspiration after that life which is most beneficent to the community, that life, in short, towards which she herself aspired in the now famous prayer to reach

"That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense."

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY HOME.

Mary Ann Evans, better known as "George Eliot," was born on November 22nd, 1819, at South Farm, a mile from Griff, in the parish of Colton, in Warwickshire. Both the date and place of her birth have been incorrectly stated, hitherto, in the notices of her life. The family moved to Griff House in March of the following year, when she was only six months old. Her father, Robert Evans, of Welsh origin, was a Staffordshire man from Ellaston, near Ashbourne, and began life as a carpenter. In the kitchen at Griff House may still be seen a beautifully fashioned oaken press, a sample of his workmanship. A portrait of him, also preserved there, is known among the family as "Adam Bede." It is not as good a likeness as that of a certain carefully painted miniature, the features of which bear an unmistakable resemblance to those of the daughter destined to immortalize his name. A strongly marked, yet handsome face, massive in structure, and with brown eyes, whose shrewd, penetrating glance is particularly noticeable, betoken the man of strong practical intelligence, of rare energy and endurance. His career and character are partially depicted in Adam Bede, Caleb Garth, and Mr. Hackit — portraitures in which the different stages of his life are recorded with a mingling of fact and fiction. A shadowing forth of the same nature is discernible in the devotion of Stradivarius to his noble craft; and even in the tender paternity of Mr. Tulliver there are indications of another phase of the same individuality.

Like Adam Bede, Mr. Evans from carpenter rose to be forester, and from forester to be land-agent. It was in the latter capacity alone that he was ever known in Warwickshire. At one time he was surveyor to five estates in the midland counties — those of Lord Aylesford, Lord Lifford, Mr. Bromley Davenport, Mrs. Gregory, and Sir Roger Newdigate. The last was his principal employer. Having early discerned the exceptional capacity of the man, Sir Roger induced him to settle in Warwickshire, and take charge of his estates. Sir Roger's seat, Arbury Hall, is the original of the charming description of Cheverel Manor in 'Mr. Gilfil's Love Story.' It is said that Mr. Evans's trustworthiness had become proverbial in the county. But while faithfully serving his employers he also enjoyed great popularity among their tenants. He was gentle, but of indomitable firmness; and while stern to the idle and unthrifty, he did not press heavily on those who might be behindhand with their rent, owing to ill-luck or misfortune, on quarter days.

Mr. Evans was twice married. He had lost his first wife, by whom he had a son and a daughter, before settling in Warwickshire. Of his second wife, whose maiden name was Pearson, very little is known. She must, therefore, according to Schiller, have been a pattern of womanhood; for he says that the best women, like the best ruled states, have no history. We have it on very good authority, however, that Mrs. Hackit, in 'Amos Barton,' is a faithful likeness of George Eliot's mother. This may seem startling at first, but, on reflection, she is the woman one might have expected, being a strongly marked figure, with a heart as tender as her tongue is sharp. She is described as a thin woman, with a chronic liver-complaint, of indefatigable industry and epigrammatic speech; who, "in the utmost enjoyment of spoiling a friend's self-satisfaction, was never known to spoil a stocking." A notable housewife, whose clock-work regularity in all domestic affairs was such that all her farm-work was done by nine o'clock in the morning, when she would sit down to her loom. "In the same spirit, she brought out her furs on the first of November, whatever might be the temperature. She was not a woman weakly to accommodate her-

self to shilly-shally proceedings. If the season did n't know what it ought to do, Mrs. Hackit did. In her best days it was always sharp weather at 'Gunpowder Plot,' and she did n't like new fashions." Keenly observant and quick of temper, she was yet full of good nature, her sympathy showing itself in the active helpfulness with which she came to the assistance of poor Milly Barton, and the love she showed to her children, who, however, declined kissing her.

Is there not a strong family resemblance between this character and Mrs. Poyser, that masterpiece of George Eliot's art? Mary Ann's gift of pointed speech was therefore mother-wit, in the true sense, and her rich humor and marvellous powers of observation were derived from the same side, while her conscientiousness, her capacity, and that faculty of taking pains, which is so large a factor in the development of genius, came more directly from the father.

Mr. Evans had three children by his second wife, Christiana, Isaac, and Mary Ann. "It is interesting, I think," writes George Eliot, in reply to some questions of an American lady, "to know whether a writer was born in a central or border district — a condition which always has a strongly determining influence. I was born in Warwickshire, but certain family traditions connected with more northerly districts made these districts a region of poetry to me in my early childhood." In the autobiographical sonnets, entitled 'Brother and Sister,' we catch a glimpse of the mother preparing her children for their accustomed ramble, by stroking down the tippet and setting the frill in order; then standing on the door-step to follow their lessening figures "with the benediction of her gaze." Mrs. Evans was aware, to a certain extent, of her daughter's unusual capacity, being anxious not only that she should have the best education attainable in the neighborhood, but also that good moral influences should be brought to bear upon her: still, the girl's constant habit of reading, even in bed, caused the practical mother not a little annoyance.

The house, where the family lived at that time, and in which the first twenty years of Mary Ann Evans's life were spent, is situated in a rich verdant landscape, where the

"grassy fields, each with a sort of personality given to it by the capricious hedge-rows," blend harmoniously with the red-roofed cottages scattered in a happy haphazard fashion amid orchards and elder-bushes. Sixty years ago the country was much more thickly wooded than now, and from the windows of Griff House might be seen the oaks and elms that had still survived from Shakespeare's forest of Arden. The house of the Evans family, half manor-house, half farm, was an old-fashioned building, two stories high, with red brick walls thickly covered with ivy. Like the Garths, they were probably "very fond of their old house." A lawn, interspersed with trees, stretched in front towards the gate, flanked by two stately Norway firs, while a sombre old yew almost touched some of the upper windows with its wide-spreading branches. A farm-yard was at the back, with low rambling sheds and stables; and beyond that, bounded by quiet meadows, one may still see the identical "leafy, flowery, bushy" garden, which George Eliot so often delighted in describing, at a time when her early life, with all its tenderly hoarded associations, had become to her but a haunting memory of bygone things. A garden where roses and cabbages jostle each other, where vegetables have to make room for gnarled old apple-trees, and where, amid the raspberry-bushes and row of currant-trees, you expect to come upon Hetty herself, "stooping to gather the low-hanging fruit."

Such was the place where the childhood of George Eliot was spent. Here she drew in those impressions of English rural and provincial life, of which one day she was to become the greatest interpreter. Impossible to be in a better position for seeing life. Not only was her father's position always improving, so that she was early brought in contact with different grades of society, but his calling made him more or less acquainted with all ranks of his neighbors, and, says George Eliot, "I have always thought that the most fortunate Britons are those whose experience has given them a practical share in many aspects of the national lot, who have lived long among the mixed commonalty, roughing it with them under difficulties, knowing how their food tastes to them, and getting acquainted with their notions and motives, not by inference

from traditional types in literature, or from philosophical theories, but from daily fellowship and observation."

And what kind of a child was it who loitered about the farm-yard and garden and fields, noticing everything with grave, watchful eyes, and storing it in a memory of extraordinary tenacity? One of her schoolfellows, who knew her at the age of thirteen, confessed to me that it was impossible to imagine George Eliot as a baby; that it seemed as if she must have come into the world fully developed, like a second Minerva. Her features were fully formed at a very early age, and she had a seriousness of expression almost startling for her years. The records of her child-life may be deciphered, amid some romantic alterations, in the early history of Tom and Maggie Tulliver. Isaac and Mary Ann Evans were playmates, like these, the latter having all the tastes of a boy; whereas her sister Chrissy, said to be the original of Lucy Deane, had peculiarly dainty feminine ways, and shrank from out-door rambles for fear of soiling her shoes or pinafore. But Mary Ann and her brother went fishing together, or spinning tops, or digging for earth-nuts; and the twice-told incident of the little girl being left to mind the rod and losing herself in dreamy contemplation, oblivious of her task, is evidently taken from life, and may be quoted as a reminiscence of her own childhood: —

"One day my brother left me in high charge
To mind the rod, while he went seeking bait,
And bade me, when I saw a nearing barge,
Snatch out the line, lest he should come too late.

"Proud of the task I watched with all my might
For one whole minute, till my eyes grew wide,
Till sky and earth took on a new, strange light,
And seemed a dream-world floating on some tide.

"A fair pavilioned boat for me alone,
Bearing me onward through the vast unknown.

"But sudden came the barge's pitch-black prow,
Nearer and angrier came my brother's cry,
And all my soul was quivering fear, when lo!
Upon the imperilled line, suspended high,

"A silver perch! My guilt that won the prey
Now turned to merit, had a guerdon rich
Of hugs and praises, and made merry play
Until my triumph reached its highest pitch

"When all at home were told the wondrous feat,
And how the little sister had fished well.
In secret, though my fortune tasted sweet,
I wondered why this happiness befell.

"'The little lass had luck,' the gardener said;
And so I learned, luck was to glory wed."

Unlike Maggie, however, little Mary Ann was as good a hand at fishing as her brother, only differing from him in not liking to put the worms on the hooks.

Another incident taken from real life, if somewhat magnified, is the adventure with the gypsies. For the prototype of Maggie also fell among these marauding vagrants, and was detained a little time among them. Whether she also proposed to instruct the gypsies and to gain great influence over them by teaching them something about "geography" and "Columbus," does not transpire. But, indeed, most of Maggie's early experiences are autobiographic, down to such facts as her father telling her to rub her "turnip" cheeks against Sally's to get a little bloom, and to cutting off one side of her hair in a passion. At a very early age Mary Ann and her brother were sent to the village free school at Colton, in the parish of Griff, a not unusual custom in those days, when the means of tuition for little children were much more difficult to procure than now. There are still old men living who used to sit on the same form with little Mary Ann Evans learning her A, B, C, and a certain William Jacques (the original of the delightfully comic Bob Jakins of fiction) remembers carrying her pick-a-back on the lawn in front of her father's house.

As the brother and sister grew older they saw less of each other, Mary Ann being sent to a school at Nuneaton, kept by Miss Lewis, for whom she retained an affectionate regard long years afterwards. About the same time she taught at a Sunday-school, in a little cottage adjoining her father's house.

When she was twelve years old, being then, in the words of a neighbor, who occasionally called at Griff House, "a queer, three-cornered, awkward girl," who sat in corners and shyly watched her elders, she was placed as boarder with the Misses Franklin at Coventry. This school, then in high repute throughout the neighborhood, was kept by two sisters, of whom the younger, Miss Rebecca Franklin, was a woman of unusual attainments and ladylike culture, although not without a certain taint of Johnsonian affectation. She seems to have thoroughly grounded Miss Evans in a sound English education, laying great stress in particular on the propriety of a precise and careful manner of speaking and reading. She herself always made a point of expressing herself in studied sentences, and on one occasion, when a friend had called to ask after a dying relative, she actually kept the servant waiting till she had framed an appropriately worded message. Miss Evans, in whose family a broad provincial dialect was spoken, soon acquired Miss Rebecca's carefully elaborated speech, and, not content with that, she might be said to have created a new voice for herself. In later life every one who knew her was struck by the sweetness of her voice, and the finished construction of every sentence, as it fell from her lips; for by that time the acquired habit had become second nature, and blended harmoniously with her entire personality. But in those early days the artificial effort at perfect propriety of expression was still perceptible, and produced an impression of affectation, perhaps reflecting that of her revered instructress. It is also believed that some of the beauty of her intonation in reading English poetry was owing to the same early influence.

Mary Ann, or Marian as she came afterwards to be called, remained about three years with the Misses Franklin. She stood aloof from the other pupils, and one of her school-fellows, Miss Bradley Jenkins, says that she was quite as remarkable in those early days as after she had acquired fame. She seems to have strangely impressed the imagination of the latter, who, figuratively speaking, looked up at her "as at a mountain." There was never anything of the schoolgirl about Miss Evans, for, even at that early age, she had the

manners and appearance of a grave, staid woman; so much so, that a stranger, happening to call one day, mistook this girl of thirteen for one of the Misses Franklin, who were then middle-aged women. In this, also, there is a certain resemblance to Maggie Tulliver, who, at the age of thirteen, is described as looking already like a woman. English composition, French and German, were some of the studies to which much time and attention were devoted. Being greatly in advance of the other pupils in the knowledge of French, Miss Evans and Miss Jenkins were taken out of the general class and set to study it together; but, though the two girls were thus associated in a closer fellowship, no real intimacy apparently followed from it. The latter watched the future "George Eliot" with intense interest, but always felt as if in the presence of a superior, though socially their positions were much on a par. This haunting sense of superiority precluded the growth of any closer friendship between the two fellow-pupils. All the more startling was it to the admiring schoolgirl, when one day, on using Marian Evans's German dictionary, she saw scribbled on its blank page some verses, evidently original, expressing rather sentimentally a yearning for love and sympathy. Under this granite-like exterior, then, there was beating a heart that passionately craved for human tenderness and companionship!

Inner solitude was no doubt the portion of George Eliot in those days. She must already have had a dim consciousness of unusual power, to a great extent isolating her from the girls of her own age, absorbed as they were in quite other feelings and ideas. Strong religious convictions pervaded her life at this period, and in the fervid faith and spiritual exaltation which characterize Maggie's girlhood, we have a very faithful picture of the future novelist's own state of mind. Passing through many stages of religious thought, she was first simple Church of England, then Low Church, then "Anti-Supernatural." In this latter character she wore an "Anti-Supernatural" cap, in which, so says an early friend, "her plain features looked all the plainer." But her nature was a mixed one, as indeed is Maggie's too, and conflicting tendencies and inclinations pulled her, no doubt, in different

directions. The self-renouncing impulses of one moment were checkmated at another by an eager desire for approbation and distinguishing pre-eminence; and a piety verging on asceticism did not exclude, on the other hand, a very clear perception of the advantages and desirability of good birth, wealth, and high social position. Like her own charming Esther in 'Felix Holt,' she had a fine sense, amid somewhat anomalous surroundings, of the highest refinements and delicacies which are supposed to be the natural attributes of people of rank and fashion. She even shared with the above-mentioned heroine certain girlish vanities and weaknesses, such as liking to have all things about her person as elegant as possible.

About the age of fifteen Marian Evans left the Misses Franklin, and soon afterwards she had the misfortune of losing her mother, who died in her forty-ninth year. Writing to a friend in after life she says, "I began at sixteen to be acquainted with the unspeakable grief of a last parting, in the death of my mother." Less sorrowful partings ensued, though in the end they proved almost as irrevocable. Her elder sister, and the brother in whose steps she had once followed "puppy-like," married and settled in homes of their own. Their different lots in life, and the far more pronounced differences of their aims and ideas, afterwards divided the "brother and sister" completely. This kind of separation between people who have been friends in youth is often more terrible to endure than the actual loss by death itself, and doth truly "work like madness in the brain." Is there not some reference to this in that pathetic passage in 'Adam Bede': "Family likeness has often a deep sadness in it. Nature, that great tragic dramatist, knits us together by bone and muscle, and divides us by the subtler web of our brains, blends yearning and repulsion, and ties us by our heartstrings to the beings that jar us at every movement . . . we see eyes — ah! so like our mother's, averted from us in cold alienation."

For some years after this Miss Evans and her father remained alone together at Griff House. He offered to get a housekeeper, as not the house only, but farm matters, had to be looked after, and he was always tenderly considerate of

"the little wench," as he called her. But his daughter preferred taking the whole management of the place into her own hands, and she was as conscientious and diligent in the discharge of her domestic duties as in the prosecution of the studies she carried on at the same time. One of her chief beauties was in her large, finely shaped, feminine hands — hands which she has, indeed, described as characteristic of several of her heroines; but she once pointed out to a friend at Foleshill that one of them was broader across than the other, saying, with some pride, that it was due to the quantity of butter and cheese she had made during her housekeeping days at Griff. It will be remembered that this is a characteristic attributed to the exemplary Nancy Lammeter, whose person gave one the idea of "perfect, unvarying neatness, as the body of a little bird," only her hands bearing "the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work." Certainly the description of the dairy in 'Adam Bede,' and all the processes of butter-making, is one which only complete knowledge could have rendered so perfect. Perhaps no scene in all her novels stands out with more lifelike vividness than that dairy which one could have sickened for in hot, dusty streets: "Such coolness, such purity, such fresh fragrance of new pressed cheese, of firm butter, of wooden vessels perpetually bathed in pure water; such soft coloring of red earthenware and creamy surfaces, brown wood and polished tin, gray limestone and rich orange-red rust on the iron weights and hooks and hinges."

This life of mixed practical activity and intellectual pursuits came to an end in 1841, when Mr. Evans relinquished Griff House, and the management of Sir Roger Newdigate's estates, to his married son, and removed with his daughter to Foleshill, near Coventry.

CHAPTER III.

YOUTHFUL STUDIES AND FRIENDSHIPS.

The period from about twenty to thirty is usually the most momentous in the lives of illustrious men and women. It is true that the most abiding impressions, those which the future author will reproduce most vividly, have been absorbed by the growing brain previous to this age; but the fusion of these varied impressions of the outward world with the inner life, and the endless combinations in which imagination delights, rarely begin before. Then, as a rule, the ideas are engendered to be carried out in the maturity of life. Alfred de Vigny says truly enough:

> "Qu'est-ce qu'une grande vie ?
> Une pensée de la jeunesse, exécutée par l'âge mur."

Moreover, it is a revolutionary age. Inherited opinions that had been accepted, as the rotation of the seasons, with unhesitating acquiescence, become an object of speculation and passionate questioning. Nothing is taken upon trust. The intellect, stimulated by the sense of expanding and hitherto unchecked capacity, delights in exercising its strength by critically passing in review the opinions, laws, institutions commonly accepted as unalterable. And if the intellect is thus active, the heart is still more so. This is emphatically the time of enthusiastic friendship and glowing love, if often also of cruel disenchantment and disillusion. In most biographies, therefore, this phase of life is no less fascinating than instructive. For it shows the individual while still in a stage of growth already reacting on his environment, and becoming a motive power according to the measure of his intellectual and moral endowments.

It is on this state of George Eliot's life that we are now entering. At Foleshill she acquired that vast range of knowledge and universality of culture which so eminently distinguished her.

The house she now inhabited, though not nearly as picturesque or substantial as the former home of the Evanses, was yet sufficiently spacious, with a pleasant garden in front and behind it; the latter, Marian Evans was fond of making as much like the delicious garden of her childhood as was possible under the circumstances. In other respects she greatly altered her ways of life, cultivating an ultra-fastidiousness in her manners and household arrangements. Though so young, she was not only entire mistress of her father's establishment, but, as his business required him to be abroad the greater part of each week, she was mostly alone.

Her life now became more and more that of a student, one of her chief reasons for rejoicing at the change of residence being the freer access to books. She had, however, already amassed quite a library of her own by this time. In addition to her private studies, she was now also able to have masters to instruct her in a variety of subjects. The Rev. T. Sheepshanks, head master of the Coventry Grammar-school, gave her lessons in Greek and Latin, as she particularly wished to learn the former language in order to read Æschylus. She continued her study of French, German, and Italian under the tuition of Signor Brezzi, even acquiring some knowledge of Hebrew by her own unassisted efforts. Mr. Simms, the veteran organist of St. Michael's Coventry, instructed her in the pianoforte; and probably Rosamond Vincy's teacher in 'Middlemarch' is a faithful portraiture of him. "Her master at Mrs. Lemon's school (close to a country town with a memorable history that had its relics in church and castle) was one of those excellent musicians here and there to be found in the provinces, worthy to compare with many a noted Kapellmeister in a country which offers more plentiful conditions of musical celebrity." George Eliot's sympathetic rendering of her favorite composers, particularly Beethoven and Schubert, was always delightful to her friends, although connoisseurs considered her possessed of little or no strictly technical knowledge. Be that as it may, many an exquisite passage, scattered up and down her works, bears witness to her heartfelt appreciation of music, which seems to have had a more intimate attraction for her than the fine arts. She shows

little feeling for archæological beauties, in which Warwickshire is so rich: in her 'Scenes of Clerical Life' dismissing a fine monument of Lady Jane Grey, a genuine specimen of old Gothic art at Astley Church, with a sneer about "marble warriors, and their wives without noses."

In spite of excessive study, this period of Marian's life is not without faint echoes of an early love-story of her own. In the house of one of her married half-sisters she met a young man who promised, at that time, to take a distinguished position in his profession. A kind of engagement, or semi-engagement, took place, which Mr. Evans refused to countenance, and finally his daughter broke it off in a letter, showing both her strong sense and profoundly affectionate nature. At this time she must have often had a painful consciousness of being cut off from that living fellowship with the like-minded so stimulating to the intellectual life. Men are not so subject to this form of soul hunger as women; for at their public schools and colleges they are brought into contact with their contemporaries, and cannot fail to find comrades amongst them of like thoughts and aspirations with themselves. A fresh life, however, at once vivifying to her intellect and stimulating to her heart, now began for Marian Evans in the friendship she formed with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bray of Rosehill, Coventry. Rahel — the subtly gifted German woman, whose letters and memoirs are a treasury of delicate observation and sentiment — observes that people of marked spiritual affinities are bound to meet some time or other in their lives. If not entirely true, there is a good deal to be said for this comforting theory; as human beings of similar nature seem constantly converging as by some magnetic attraction.

The circle to which Miss Evans now happened to be introduced was in every sense congenial and inspiriting. Mr. Bray, his wife, and his sister-in-law were a trio more like some delightful characters in a first-rate novel than the sober inhabitants of a Warwickshire country town. Living in a house beautifully situated on the outskirts of Coventry, they used to spend their lives in philosophical speculations, philanthropy, and pleasant social hospitality, joining to the ease and *laisser aller* of continental manners a thoroughly English geniality and trustworthiness.

Mr. Bray was a wealthy ribbon manufacturer, but had become engrossed from an early age in religious and metaphysical speculation as well as in political and social questions. Beginning to inquire into the dogmas which formed the basis of his belief, he found, on careful investigation, that they did not stand, in his opinion, the test of reason. His arguments set his brother-in-law, Mr. Charles C. Hennell, a Unitarian, to examine afresh and go carefully over the whole ground of popular theology, the consequence of this close study being the 'Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity,' a work which attracted a good deal of attention when it appeared, and was translated into German at the instance of David Strauss. It was published in 1838, a few years after the appearance of the 'Life of Jesus.' In its critical examination of the miracles, and in the sifting of mythological from historical elements in the Gospels, it bears considerable analogy to Strauss's great work, although strictly based on independent studies, being originally nothing more than an attempt to solve the doubts of a small set of friends. Their doubts were solved, but not in the manner originally anticipated.

Mrs. Bray, of an essentially religious nature, shared the opinions of her husband and brother, and without conforming to the external rites and ceremonies of a creed, led a life of saintly purity and self-devotion. The exquisite beauty of her moral nature not only attracted Marian to this truly amiable woman, but filled her with reverence, and the friendship then commenced was only ended by death.

In Miss Sara Hennell, Marian Evans found another congenial companion who became as a sister to her. This singular being, in most respects such a contrast to her sister, high-strung, nervous, excitable, importing all the ardor of feeling into a life of austere thought, seemed in a manner mentally to totter under the weight of her own immense metaphysical speculations. A casual acquaintance of these two young ladies might perhaps have predicted that Miss Hennell was the one destined to achieve fame in the future, and she certainly must have been an extraordinary mental stimulus to her young friend Marian. These gifted sisters, two of a family, all the members of which were remarkable, by some

are identified as the originals of the delightful Meyrick household in 'Daniel Deronda.' Each member of this genial group was already, or ultimately became, an author of more or less repute. A reviewer in the *Westminster*, writing of Mr. Bray's philosophical publications, some years ago, said: "If he would reduce his many works to one containing nothing unessential, he would doubtless obtain that high place among the philosophers of our country to which his powers of thought entitle him." His most popular book, called 'The Education of the Feelings,' intended for use in secular schools, deals with the laws of morality practically applied. Mrs. Bray's writings, on the same order of subjects, are still further simplified for the understanding of children. She is the authoress of 'Physiology for Schools,' 'The British Empire,' 'Elements of Morality,' etc. Her 'Duty to Animals' has become a class book in the schools of the midland counties, and she was one of the first among those noble-hearted men and women who have endeavored to introduce a greater degree of humanity into our treatment of animals.

George Eliot, writing to Mrs. Bray in March 1873 on this very subject, says:

"A very good, as well as very rich, woman, Mrs. S——, has founded a model school at Naples, and has the sympathy of the best Italians in her educational efforts. Of course a chief point in trying to improve the Italians is to teach them kindness to animals, and a friend of Mrs. S—— has confided to her a small sum of money — fifty pounds, I think — to be applied to the translation and publication of some good books for young people, which would be likely to rouse in them a sympathy with dumb creatures.

"Will you kindly help me in the effort to further Mrs. S——'s good work by sending me a copy of your book on animals, and also by telling me the periodical in which the parts of the book first appeared, as well as the titles of any other works which you think would be worth mentioning for the purpose in question?

"Mrs. S—— (as indeed you may probably know) is the widow of a German merchant of Manchester, as rich as many such merchants are, and as benevolent as only the choicest

few. She knows all sorts of good work for the world, and is known by most of the workers. It struck me, while she was speaking of this need of a book to translate, that you had done the very thing."

A few days later the following highly interesting letter came from the same source:

"Many thanks for the helpful things you have sent me. 'The Wounded Bird' is charming. But now something very much larger of the same kind must be written, and you are the person to write it — something that will bring the emotions, sufferings, and possible consolations of the dear brutes vividly home to the imaginations of children: fitted for children of all countries, as Reineke Fuchs is comprehensible to all nations. A rough notion came to me the other day of supposing a house of refuge, not only for dogs, but for all distressed animals. The keeper of this refuge understands the language of the brutes, which includes differences of dialect not hindering communication even between birds and dogs, by the help of some Ulysses among them who is versed in the various tongues, and puts in the needed explanations. Said keeper overhears his refugees solacing their evenings by telling the story of their experiences, and finally acts as editor of their autobiographies. I imagine my long-loved fellow-creature, the ugly dog, telling the sorrows and the tender emotions of gratitude which have wrought him into a sensitive soul. The donkey is another cosmopolitan sufferer, and a greater martyr than Saint Lawrence. If we only knew what fine motives he has for his meek endurance, and how he loves a friend who will scratch his nose!

"All this is not worth anything except to make you feel how much better a plan you can think of.

"Only you must positively write this book which everybody wants — this book which will do justice to the share our 'worthy fellow-laborers' have had in the groaning and travailing of the world towards the birth of the right and fair.

"But you must not do it without the 'sustenance of labor,' — I don't say 'pay,' since there is no pay for good work. Let Mr. . . . be blest with the blessing of the unscrupulous. I want to contribute something towards helping the brutes, and

helping the children, especially the southern children, to be good to the creatures who are continually at their mercy. I can't write the needed book myself, but I feel sure that you can, and that you will not refuse the duty."

Mrs. Bray's answer to this humorous suggestion may be gathered from George Eliot's amiable reply:

"I see at once that you must be right about the necessity for being simple and literal. In fact I have ridiculous impulses in teaching children, and always make the horizon too wide.

"'The Wounded Bird' is perfect of its kind, and that kind is the best for a larger work. You yourself see clearly that it is an exceptional case for any one to be able to write books for children without putting in them false morality disguised as devout religion. And you are one of the exceptional cases. I am quite sure, from what you have done, that you can do the thing which is still wanted to be done. As to imagination, 'The Wounded Bird' is full of imagination."

These extracts pleasantly illustrate both the writer and recipient of such humane letters; and, though written at a much later period, not only give an idea of the nature of Mrs. Bray's literary pursuits, but of the friendly relations subsisting to the end between her and George Eliot.

Of Miss Hennell's work it is more difficult to speak without entering more deeply into her subject-matter than is compatible with the scope of the present work. In one of her best-known books, entitled 'Thoughts in Aid of Faith,' she makes the daring attempt to trace the evolution of religion, her mode of thought partaking at once of the scientific and the mystical. For the present she seems to be one of the very few women who have ventured into the arena of philosophy; and, curiously enough, her doctrine is that there should be a feminine method in metaphysics as well as a masculine, the sexes, according to this singular theory, finding their counterpart in religion and science. It may be remembered that George Eliot, in one of her essays, is of opinion that women should endeavor to make some distinctively feminine contributions to the intellectual pursuits they engage in, saying, "Let the whole field of reality be laid open to woman as well as to man, and then that which is peculiar in her

mental modification, instead of being, as it is now, a source of discord and repulsion between the sexes, will be found to be a necessary complement to the truth and beauty of life. Then we shall have that marriage of minds which alone can blend all the hues of thought and feeling in one lovely rainbow of promise for the harvest of happiness." Something of the same idea lies at the root of much in Miss Hennell's mystical disquisitions.

This circumstantial account of the circle to which Miss Evans was now introduced has been given, because it consisted of friends who, more than any others, helped in the growth and formation of her mind. No human being, indeed, can be fully understood without some knowledge of the companions that at one time or other, but especially during the period of development, have been intimately associated with his or her life. However vastly a mountain may appear to loom above us from the plain, on ascending to its summit one always finds innumerable lesser eminences which all help in making up the one imposing central effect. And similarly in the world of mind, many superior natures, in varying degrees, all contribute their share towards the maturing of that exceptional intellectual product whose topmost summit is genius.

The lady who first introduced Marian Evans to the Brays was not without an object of her own, for her young friend — whose religious fervor, tinged with evangelical sentiment, was as conspicuous as her unusual learning and thoughtfulness — seemed to her peculiarly fitted to exercise a beneficial influence on the Rosehill household, where generally unorthodox opinions were much in vogue.

Up to the age of seventeen or eighteen Marian had been considered the most truly pious member of her family, being earnestly bent, as she says, "to shape this anomalous English Christian life of ours into some consistency with the spirit and simple verbal tenor of the New Testament." "I was brought up," she informs another correspondent, "in the Church of England, and have never joined any other religious society; but I have had close acquaintance with many dissenters of various sects, from Calvinistic Anabaptists to

Unitarians." Her inner life at this time is faithfully mirrored in the spiritual experiences of Maggie Tulliver. Marian Evans was not one who could rest satisfied with outward observances and lip-worship: she needed a faith which should give unity and sanctity to the conception of life; which should awaken "that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, which is to the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life." At one time Evangelicalism supplied her with the most essential conditions of a religious life: with all the vehemence of an ardent nature she flung her whole soul into a passionate acceptance of the teaching of Christianity, carrying her zeal to the pitch of asceticism.

This was the state of her mind, at the age of seventeen, when her aunt from Wirksworth came to stay with her. Mrs. Elizabeth Evans (who came afterwards to be largely identified with Dinah Morris) was a zealous Wesleyan, having at one time been a noted preacher; but her niece, then a rigid Calvinist, hardly thought her doctrine strict enough. When this same aunt paid her a visit, some years afterwards, at Foleshill, Marian's views had already undergone a complete transformation, and their intercourse was constrained and painful; for the young evangelical enthusiast, who had been a favorite in clerical circles, was now in what she afterwards described as a "crude state of freethinking." It was a period of transition through which she gradually passed into a new religious synthesis.

Her intimacy with the Brays began about the time when these new doubts were beginning to ferment in her. Her expanding mind, nourished on the best literature, ancient and modern, began to feel cramped by dogmas that had now lost their vitality; yet a break with an inherited form of belief to which a thousand tender associations bound her was a catastrophe she shrank from with dread. Hence a period of mental uncertainty and trouble. In consequence of these inward questionings, it happened that the young lady who had been unwittingly brought to convert her new acquaintances was converted by them. In intercourse with them she was able freely to open her mind, their enlightened views helping

her in this crisis of her spiritual life; and she found it an intense relief to feel no longer bound to reconcile her moral and intellectual perceptions with a particular form of worship.

The antagonism she met with in certain quarters, the social persecution from which she had much to suffer, are perhaps responsible for some of the sharp, caustic irony with which she afterwards assailed certain theological habits of thought. It is not unlikely that in some of her essays for the *Westminster Review* she mainly expressed the thoughts which were stirred in her by the opposition she encountered at this period of her life — as, for example, in the brilliant paper entitled 'Worldliness and Other-Worldliness,' which contains such a scathing passage as the following:

"For certain other elements of virtue, which are of more obvious importance to untheological minds, — a delicate sense of our neighbor's rights, an active participation in the joys and sorrows of our fellow-men, a magnanimous acceptance of privation or suffering for ourselves when it is the condition of good to others, in a word, the extension and intensification of our sympathetic nature, we think it of some importance to contend, that they have no more direct relation to the belief in a future state than the interchange of gases in the lungs has to the plurality of worlds. Nay, to us it is conceivable that to some minds the deep pathos lying in the thought of human morality — that we are here for a little while and then vanish away, that this earthly life is all that is given to our loved ones, and to our many suffering fellow-men, lies nearer the fountains of moral emotion than the conception of extended existence. . . . To us it is matter of unmixed rejoicing that this latter necessity of healthful life is independent of theological ink, and that its evolution is insured in the interaction of human souls as certainly as the evolution of science or of art, with which, indeed, it is but a twin ray, melting into them with undefinable limits."

It was, of course, inevitable that her changed tone of mind should attract the attention of the family and friends of Marian, and that the backsliding of so exemplary a member should afford matter for scandal in many a clerical circle and

evangelical tea-meeting. Close to the Evanses there lived at that time a dissenting minister, whose daughter Mary was a particular favorite of Marian Evans. There had been much neighborly intimacy between the two young ladies, and though there was only five years' difference between them, Marian always inspired her friend with a feeling of awe at her intellectual superiority. Yet her sympathy — that sympathy with all human life which was the strongest element of her character — was even then so irresistible that every little trouble of Mary's life was intrusted to her keeping. But the sudden discovery of their daughter's friend being an "infidel" came with the shock of a thunder-clap on the parents. Much hot argument passed between the minister and this youthful controversialist, but the former clinched the whole question by a triumphant reference to the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world as an irrefutable proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible. In spite of this vital difference on religious questions, Miss Evans was suffered to go on giving the minister's daughter lessons in German, which were continued for two or three years, she having generously undertaken this labor of love twice a week, because she judged from the shape of her young friend's head — phrenology being rife in those days — that she must have an excellent understanding. But, better than languages, she taught her the value of time, always cutting short mere random talk by simply ignoring it. Altogether the wonderful strength of her personality manifested itself even at this early period in the indelible impression it left on her pupil's memory, many of her sayings remaining graven on it as on stone. As, for instance, when one day twitting Mary's too great self-esteem she remarked, "We are very apt to measure ourselves by our aspiration instead of our performance." Or when on a friend's asking, "What is the meaning of Faust?" she replied, "The same as the meaning of the universe." While reading '*Wallenstein's Lager*' with her young pupil, the latter happened to say how life-like the characters seemed: "Don't say *seemed*," exclaimed Marian; "we know that they *are* true to the life." And she immediately began repeating the talk of laborers, farriers, butchers, and others of that class, with such close

imitation as to startle her friend. Is not this a foreshadowing of the inimitable scene at the 'Rainbow'?

By far the most trying consequence of her change of views was that now, for the first time, Marian was brought into collision with her father, whose pet she had always been. He could not understand her inward perplexities, nor the need of her soul for complete inward unity of thought, a condition impossible to her under the limiting conditions of a dogmatic evangelicalism, "where folly often mistakes itself for wisdom, ignorance gives itself airs of knowledge, and selfishness, turning its eyes upwards, calls itself religion." She, on the other hand, after a painful struggle, wanted to break away from the old forms of worship, and refused to go to church. Deeply attached though she was to her father, the need to make her acts conform with her convictions became irresistible. Under such conflicting tendencies a rupture between father and daughter became imminent, and for a short time a breaking up of the home was contemplated, Marian intending to go and live by herself in Coventry. One of the leading traits in her nature was its adhesiveness, however, and the threat of separation proved so painful to her that her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bray, persuaded her to conform to her father's wishes as far as outward observances were implied, and for the rest he did not trouble himself to inquire into her thoughts or occupations.

From a letter written at this period it appears that the 'Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity' had made a most powerful impression on her mind. Indeed, she dated from it a new birth. But so earnest and conscientious was she in her studies, that before beginning its longed-for perusal, she and a friend determined to read the Bible through again from beginning to end.

The intimacy between the inmates of Rosehill and the girl student at Foleshill meanwhile was constantly growing closer. They met daily, and in their midst the humorous side of her nature expanded no less than her intellect. Although striking ordinary acquaintances by an abnormal gravity, when completely at her ease she at times bubbled over with fun and gayety, irradiated by the unexpected flashes of a wit whose full

scope was probably as yet unsuspected by its possessor. Not but that Miss Evans and her friends must have been conscious, even at that early age, of extraordinary powers in her, destined some day to give her a conspicuous position in the world. For her conversation was already so full of charm, depth, and comprehensiveness, that all talk after hers seemed stale and common-place. Many were the discussions in those days between Mr. Bray and Marian Evans, and though frequently broken off in fierce dispute one evening, they always began again quite amicably the next. Mr. Bray probably exercised considerable influence on his young friend's mind at this impressible period of life; perhaps her attention to philosophy was first roused by acquaintance with him, and his varied acquirements in this department may have helped in giving a positive direction to her own thoughts.

Mr. Bray was just then working out his 'Philosophy of Necessity,' the problems discussed being the same as those which have occupied the leading thinkers of the day: Auguste Comte in his 'Positive Philosophy;' Buckle in his 'History of Civilization;' and Mr. Herbert Spencer in his 'Sociology.' The theory that, as an individual and collectively, man is as much subject to law as any of the other entities in nature, was one of those magnificent ideas which revolutionize the world of thought. Many minds, in different countries, of different calibre, were all trying to systematize what knowledge there was on this subject in order to convert hypothesis into demonstration. To what extent Mr. Bray may have based his 'Philosophy of Necessity' on independent research, or how much was merely assimilated from contemporary sources, we cannot here inquire. Enough that the ideas embodied in it represented some of the most vital thought of the age, and contributed therefore not a little to the formation of George Eliot's mind, and to the grip which she presently displayed in the handling of philosophical topics.

In 1842 the sensation created by Dr. Strauss's *Leben Jesu* had even extended to so remote a district as Warwickshire. Some persons of advanced opinions, deeply impressed by its penetrating historical criticism, which was in fact Niebuhr's method applied to the elucidation of the Gospels, were very

desirous of obtaining an English translation of this work; meeting at the house of a common friend, the late Mr. Joseph Parkes of Birmingham, they agreed, in the first blush of their enthusiasm, to raise amongst them whatever sum might be required for the purpose. Mr. Hennell, the leading spirit in this enterprise, proposed that the translation should be undertaken by Miss Brabant, the accomplished daughter of Dr. Brabant, a scholar deeply versed in theological matters, who was in friendly correspondence with Strauss and Paulus in Germany and with Coleridge and Grote in England. The lady in question, though still in her teens, was peculiarly fitted for the task, as she had already translated some of Baur's erudite writings on theological subjects into English. But when she had done about one half of the first volume, her learned labors came to an unexpected conclusion, as she became engaged to Mr. Hennell, who to great mental attainments joined much winning buoyancy of manner. And on her marriage with this gentleman she had to relinquish her task as too laborious.

Miss Brabant's acquaintance with Marian began in 1843, and in the summer of that year the whole friendly group started on an excursion to Tenby. During their stay at this watering-place the lady who had begun, and the lady destined eventually to accomplish, the enormous labor of translating the 'Life of Jesus,' gave tokens of feminine frivolity by insisting on going to a public ball, where, however, they were disappointed, as partners were very scarce. It should be remembered that Marian Evans was only twenty-three years old at this time, but, though she had not yet done anything, her friends already thought her a wonderful woman. She never seems to have had any real youthfulness, and her personal appearance greatly improved with time. It is only to the finest natures, it should be remembered, that age gives an added beauty and distinction; for the most persistent self has then worked its way to the surface, having modified the expression, and to some extent the features, to its own likeness.

There exists a colored sketch done by Mrs. Bray about this period, which gives one a glimpse of George Eliot in her girlhood. In those Foleshill days she had a quantity of

soft pale-brown hair worn in ringlets. Her head was massive, her features powerful and rugged, her mouth large but shapely, the jaw singularly square for a woman, yet having a certain delicacy of outline. A neutral tone of coloring did not help to relieve this general heaviness of structure, the complexion being pale but not fair. Nevertheless the play of expression and the wonderful mobility of the mouth, which increased with age, gave a womanly softness to the countenance in curious contrast with its framework. Her eyes, of a gray-blue, constantly varying in color, striking some as intensely blue, others as of a pale, washed-out gray, were small and not beautiful in themselves, but when she grew animated in conversation, those eyes lit up the whole face, seeming in a manner to transfigure it. So much was this the case, that a young lady, who had once enjoyed an hour's conversation with her, came away under its spell with the impression that she was beautiful, but afterwards, on seeing George Eliot again when she was not talking, she could hardly believe her to be the same person. The charm of her nature disclosed itself in her manner and in her voice, the latter recalling that of Dorothea, in being "like the voice of a soul that has once lived in an Æolian harp." It was low and deep, vibrating with sympathy.

Mr. Bray, an enthusiastic believer in phrenology, was so much struck with the grand proportions of her head that he took Marian Evans to London to have a cast taken. He thinks that, after that of Napoleon, her head showed the largest development from brow to ear of any person's recorded. The similarity of type between George Eliot's face and Savonarola's has been frequently pointed out. Some affinity in their natures may have led her, if unconsciously, to select that epoch of Florentine life in which he played so prominent a part.

Though not above the middle height Marian gave people the impression of being much taller than she really was, her figure, although thin and slight, being well-poised and not without a certain sturdiness of make. She was never robust in health, being delicately strung, and of a highly nervous temperament. In youth the keen excitability of her nature

often made her wayward and hysterical. In fact her extraordinary intellectual vigor did not exclude the susceptibilities and weaknesses of a peculiarly feminine organization. With all her mental activity she yet led an intensely emotional life, a life which must have held hidden trials for her, as in those days she was known by her friends "to weep bucketfuls of tears."

A woman of strong passions, like her own Maggie, deeply affectionate by nature, of a clinging tenderness of disposition, Marian Evans went through much inward struggle, through many painful experiences, before she reached the moral self-government of her later years. Had she not, it is hardly likely that she could have entered with so deep a comprehension into the most intricate windings of the human heart. That, of course, was to a great extent due to her sympathy, sympathy being the strongest quality of her moral nature. She flung herself, as it were, into other lives, making their affairs, their hopes, their sorrows, her own. And this power of identifying herself with the people she came near had the effect of a magnet in attracting her fellow-creatures. If friends went to her in their trouble they would find not only that she entered with deep feeling into their most minute concerns, but that, by gradual degrees, she lifted them beyond their personal distress, and that they would leave her presence in an ennobled and elevated frame of mind. This sympathy was closely connected with her faculty of detecting and responding to anything that showed the smallest sign of intellectual vitality. She essentially resembled Socrates in her manner of eliciting whatsoever capacity for thought might be latent in the people she came in contact with: were it only a shoemaker or day-laborer, she would never rest till she had found out in what points that particular man differed from other men of his class. She always rather educed what was in others than impressed herself on them; showing much kindliness of heart in drawing out people who were shy. Sympathy was the keynote of her nature, the source of her iridescent humor, of her subtle knowledge of character, and of her dramatic genius.

CHAPTER IV.

TRANSLATION OF STRAUSS AND FEUERBACH. — TOUR ON THE CONTINENT.

Miss Brabant's marriage to Mr. Charles Hennell occurred some months after this excursion to Tenby. In the meanwhile it was settled that Miss Evans should continue her translation of Dr. Strauss's *Leben Jesu*. Thus her first introduction to literature was in a sense accidental. The result proved her admirably fitted for the task; for her version of this searching and voluminous work remains a masterpiece of clear nervous English, at the same time faithfully rendering the spirit of the original. But it was a vast and laborious undertaking, requiring a large share of patience, will, and energy, quite apart from the necessary mental qualifications. On this occasion, to fit herself more fully for her weighty task, Marian taught herself a considerable amount of Hebrew. But she groaned, at times, under the pressure of the toil which had necessarily to be endured, feeling tempted to relinquish what must often have seemed almost intolerable drudgery. The active interest and encouragement of her friends, however, tided her over these moments of discouragement, and after three years of assiduous application, the translation was finally completed, and brought out by Dr. (then Mr.) John Chapman in 1846. It is probably safe to assume that the composition of none of her novels cost George Eliot half the effort and toil which this translation had done. Yet so badly is this kind of literary work remunerated, that twenty pounds was the sum paid for what had cost three years of hard labor!

Indeed, by this time, most of the twelve friends who had originally guaranteed the sum necessary for the translation and publication of the 'Life of Jesus' had conveniently forgotten the matter; and had it not been for the generosity of Mr. Joseph Parkes, who volunteered to advance the necessary funds, who knows how long the MS. translation might have lain dormant in a drawer at Foleshill? It no sooner saw the

light, however, than every one recognized the exceptional merits of the work. And for several years afterwards Miss Evans continued to be chiefly known as the translator of Strauss's *Leben Jesu.*

Soon after relieving Miss Brabant from the task of translation, Miss Evans went to stay for a time with her friend's father, Dr. Brabant, who sadly felt the loss of his daughter's intelligent and enlivening companionship. No doubt the society of this accomplished scholar, described by Mr. Grote as "a vigorous self-thinking intellect," was no less congenial than instructive to his young companion; while her singular mental acuteness and affectionate womanly ways were most grateful to the lonely old man. There is something very attractive in this episode of George Eliot's life. It recalls a frequently recurring situation in her novels, particularly that touching one of the self-renouncing devotion with which the ardent Romola throws herself into her afflicted father's learned and recondite pursuits.

There exists a letter written to an intimate friend in 1846, soon after the translation of Strauss was finished, which, I should say, already shows the future novelist in embryo. In this delightfully humorous mystification of her friends, Miss Evans pretends that, to her gratification, she has actually had a visit from a real live German professor, whose musty person was encased in a still mustier coat. This learned personage has come over to England with the single purpose of getting his voluminous writings translated into English. There are at least twenty volumes, all unpublished, owing to the envious machinations of rival authors, none of them treating of anything more modern than Cheops, or the invention of the hieroglyphics. The respectable professor's object in coming to England is to secure a wife and translator in one. But though, on inquiry, he finds that the ladies engaged in translation are legion, they mostly turn out to be utterly incompetent, besides not answering to his requirements in other respects. The qualifications he looks for in a wife, besides a thorough acquaintance with English and German, being personal ugliness and a snug little capital, sufficient to supply him with a moderate allowance of tobacco and *Schwarzbier*,

after defraying the expense of printing his books. To find this phœnix among women he is sent to Coventry on all hands.

In Miss Evans, so she runs on, the aspiring professor finds his utmost wishes realized, and so proposes to her on the spot; thinking that it may be her last chance, she accepts him with equal celerity, and her father, although strongly objecting to a foreigner, is induced to give his consent for the same reason. The lady's only stipulation is that her future husband shall take her out of England, with its dreary climate and drearier inhabitants. This being settled, she invites her friends to come to her wedding, which is to take place next week.

This lively little *jeu d'esprit* is written in the wittiest manner, and one cannot help fancying that this German Dryasdust contained the germ of one of her very subtlest masterpieces in characterization, that of the much-to-be-pitied Casaubon, the very Sisyphus of authors. In the lady, too, willing to marry her parchment-bound suitor for the sake of co-operating in his abstruse mental labors, we have a faint adumbration of the simple-minded Dorothea.

But these sudden stirrings at original invention did not prevent Miss Evans from undertaking another task, similar to her last, if not so laborious. She now set about translating Ludwig Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christenthums*. This daring philosopher, who kept aloof from professional honors, and dwelt apart in a wood, that he might be free to handle questions of theology and metaphysics with absolute fearlessness, had created a great sensation by his philosophical criticism in Germany. Unlike his countrymen, whose writings on these subjects are usually enveloped in such an impenetrable mist that their most perilous ideas pass harmlessly over the heads of the multitude, Feuerbach, by his keen incisiveness of language and luminousness of exposition, was calculated to bring his meaning home to the average reader. Mr. Garnett's account of the 'Essence of Christianity' in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' admirably concise as it is, may be quoted here, as conveying in the fewest words the gist of this "famous treatise, where Feuerbach shows that every article of Chris-

tian belief corresponds to some instinct or necessity of man's nature, from which he infers that it is the creation and embodiment of some human wish, hope, or apprehension. . . . Following up the hint of one of the oldest Greek philosophers, he demonstrates that religious ideas have their counterparts in human nature, and assumes that they must be its product."

The translation of the 'Essence of Christianity' was also published by Mr. Chapman in 1854. It appeared in his 'Quarterly Series,' destined "to consist of works by learned and profound thinkers, embracing the subjects of theology, philosophy, biblical criticism, and the history of opinion." Probably because her former translation had been so eminently successful, Miss Evans received fifty pounds for her present work. But there was no demand for it in England, and Mr. Chapman lost heavily by its publication.

About the same period Miss Evans also translated Spinoza's *De Deo* for the benefit of an inquiring friend. But her English version of the 'Ethics' was not undertaken till the year 1854, after she had left her home at Foleshill. In applying herself to the severe labor of rendering one philosophical work after another into English, Miss Evans, no doubt, was bent on elucidating for herself some of the most vital problems which engage the mind when once it has shaken itself free from purely traditional beliefs, rather than on securing for herself any pecuniary advantages. But her admirable translations attracted the attention of the like-minded, and she became gradually known to some of the most distinguished men of the time.

Unfortunately her father's health now began to fail, causing her no little pain and anxiety. At some period during his illness she stayed with him in the Isle of Wight, for in a letter to Mrs. Bray, written many years afterwards, she says, "The 'Sir Charles Grandison' you are reading must be the series of little fat volumes you lent me to carry to the Isle of Wight, where I read it at every interval when my father did not want me, and was sorry that the long novel was not longer. It is a solace to hear of any one's reading and enjoying Richardson. We have fallen on an evil generation who would not read

'Clarissa' even in an abridged form. The French have been its most enthusiastic admirers, but I don't know whether their present admiration is more than traditional, like their set phrases about their own classics."

During the last year of her father's life his daughter was also in the habit of reading Scott's novels aloud to him for several hours of each day; she must thus have become deeply versed in his manner of telling the stories in which she continued to delight all her life; and in speaking of the widening of our sympathies which a picture of human life by a great artist is calculated to produce, even in the most trivial and selfish, she gives as an instance Scott's description of Luckie Mucklebackit's cottage, and his story of the 'Two Drovers.'

But a heavy loss now befell Marian Evans in the death of her father, which occurred in 1849. Long afterwards nothing seemed to afford consolation to her grief. For eight years these two had kept house together, and the deepest mutual affection had always subsisted between them. Marian ever treasured her father's memory. As George Eliot she loved to recall in her works everything associated with him in her childhood; those happy times when, standing between her father's knees, she used to be driven by him to "outlying hamlets, whose groups of inhabitants were as distinctive to my imagination as if they belonged to different regions of the globe." Miss Evans, however, was not suffered to mourn uncomforted. The tender friends who cared for her as a sister, now planned a tour to the Continent in hopes that the change of scene and associations would soften her grief.

So they started on their travels, going to Switzerland and Italy by the approved route, which in those days was not so hackneyed as it now is. To so penetrating an observer as Miss Evans there must have been an infinite interest in this first sight of the Continent. But the journey did not seem to dispel her grief, and she continued in such very low spirits that Mrs. Bray almost regretted having taken her abroad so soon after her bereavement. Her terror, too, at the giddy passes which they had to cross, with precipices yawning on either hand — so that it seemed as if a false step must send

them rolling into the abyss — was so overpowering that the sublime spectacle of the snow-clad Alps seemed comparatively to produce but little impression on her. Her moral triumph over this constitutional timidity, when any special occasion arose, was all the more remarkable. One day when crossing the Col de Balme from Martigny to Chamounix, one of the side-saddles was found to be badly fitted, and would keep turning round, to the risk of the rider, if not very careful, slipping off at any moment. Marian, however, insisted on having this defective saddle in spite of the protest of Mrs. Bray, who felt quite guilty whenever they came to any perilous places.

How different is this timidity from George Sand's hardy spirit of enterprise! No one who has read that captivating book, her *Lettres d'un Voyageur*, can forget the great Frenchwoman's description of a Swiss expedition, during which, while encumbered with two young children, she seems to have borne all the perils, fatigues, and privations of a toilsome ascent with the hardihood of a mountaineer. But it should not be forgotten that Miss Evans was just then in a peculiarly nervous and excitable condition, and her frequent fits of weeping were a source of pain to her anxious fellow-travellers. She had, in fact, been so assiduous in attendance on her sick father, that she was physically broken down for a time. Under these circumstances an immediate return to England seemed unadvisable, and, when her friends started on their homeward journey, it was decided that Marian should remain behind at Geneva.

Here, amid scenes so intimately associated with genius — where the "self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau," placed the home of his '*Nouvelle Héloïse*,' and the octogenarian Voltaire spent the serene Indian summer of his stirring career; where Gibbon wrote his 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;' where Byron and Shelley sought refuge from the hatred of their countrymen, and which Madame de Staël complainingly exchanged for her beloved Rue du Bac — here the future author of 'Romola' and 'Middlemarch' gradually recovered under the sublime influences of Nature's healing beauties.

For about eight months Miss Evans lived at a boarding-house, "Le Plongeau," near Geneva. But she was glad to find a quieter retreat in the family of an artist, M. D'Albert, becoming much attached to him and his wife. Established in one of the lofty upper stories of this pleasant house, with the blue shimmering waters of the lake glancing far below, and the awful heights of Mont Blanc solemnly dominating the entire landscape, she not only loved to prosecute her studies, but, in isolation from mankind, to plan glorious schemes for their welfare. During this stay she drank deep of Rousseau, whose works, especially *Les Confessions*, made an indelible impression on her. And when inciting a friend to study French, she remarked that it was worth learning that language, if only to read him. At the same period Marian probably became familiarized with the magnificent social utopias of St. Simon, Proudhon, and other French writers. Having undergone a kind of mental revolution herself not so long ago, she must have felt some sympathy with the thrilling hopes of liberty which had agitated the states of Western Europe in 1849. But, as I have already pointed out, her nature had conservative leanings. She believed in progress only as the result of evolution, not revolution. And in one of her most incisive essays, entitled 'The National History of German Life,' she finely points out the "notable failure of revolutionary attempts conducted from the point of view of abstract democratic and socialistic theories." In the same article she draws a striking parallel between the growth of language and that of political institutions, contending that it would be as unsatisfactory to "construct a universal language on a rational basis" — one that had "no uncertainty, no whims of idiom, no cumbrous forms, no fitful shimmer of many-hued significance, no hoary archaisms 'familiar with forgotten years,'" — as abruptly to alter forms of government which are nothing, in fact, but the result of historical growth, systematically embodied by society.

Besides the fascinations of study, and the outward glory of nature, the charm of social intercourse was not wanting to this life at Geneva. In M. D'Albert, a very superior man, gentle, refined, and of unusual mental attainments, she found

a highly desirable daily companion. He was an artist by profession, and it is whispered that he suggested some of the traits in the character of the delicate-minded Philip Wakem in the 'Mill on the Floss.' The only portrait in oils which exists of George Eliot is one painted by M. D'Albert at this interesting time of her life. She inspired him, like most people who came into personal contact with her, with the utmost admiration and regard, and, wishing to be of some service, he escorted Miss Evans to England on her return thither. Curiously enough, M. D'Albert subsequently translated one of her works, probably 'Adam Bede,' without in the least suspecting who its real author was.

It is always a shock when vital changes have occurred in one's individual lot to return to a well-known place, after an absence of some duration, to find it wearing the same unchangeable aspect. One expects somehow that fields and streets and houses would show some alteration corresponding to that within ourselves. But already from a distance the twin spires of Coventry, familiar as household words to the Warwickshire girl, greeted the eyes of the returning traveller. In spite of all love for her native spot of earth, this was a heavy time to Marian Evans. Her father was dead, the home where she had dwelt as mistress for so many years broken up, the present appearing blank and comfortless, the future uncertain and vaguely terrifying. The question now was where she should live, what she should do, to what purposes turn the genius whose untried and partially unsuspected powers were darkly agitating her whole being.

As has been already said, Marian Evans had a highly complex nature, compounded of many contradictory impulses, which, though gradually brought into harmony as life matured, were always pulling her, in those days, in different directions. Thus, though she possessed strong family affections, she could not help feeling that to go and take up her abode in the house of some relative, where life resolved itself into a monotonous recurrence of petty considerations, something after the Glegg pattern, would be little short of crucifixion to her, and, however deep her attachment for her native soil may have been, she yet sighed passionately to break

away from its associations, and to become "a wanderer and a pilgrim on the face of the earth."

For some little time after her return from abroad Marian took up her residence with her brother and his family. But the children who had toddled hand-in-hand in the fields together had now diverged so widely that no memories of a mutual past could bridge over the chasm that divided them. Under these circumstances the family at Rosehill pressed her to make their home permanently hers, and for about a year, from 1850 to 1851, she became the member of a household in fullest sympathy with her. Here Mr. Bray's many-sided mental activity and genial brightness of disposition, and his wife's exquisite goodness of heart, must have helped to soothe and cheer one whose delicately strung nature was just then nearly bending under the excessive strain of thought and feeling she had gone through. One person, indeed, was so struck by the grave sadness generally affecting her, that it seemed to him as if her coming took all the sunshine out of the day. But whether grave or gay, whether meditative or playful, her conversation exercised a spell over all who came within its reach.

In the pleasant house at Rosehill distinguished guests were constantly coming and going, so that there was no lack of the needed intellectual friction supplied by clever and original talk. Here in a pleasant garden, planted with rustling acacia-trees, and opening on a wide prospect of richly wooded, undulating country, with the fitful brightness of English skies overhead, and a smooth-shaven lawn to walk or recline upon, many were the topics discussed by men who had made, or were about to make, their mark. Froude was known there. George Combe discussed with his host the principles of phrenology, at that time claiming "its thousands of disciples." Ralph Waldo Emerson, on a lecturing tour in this country, while on a brief visit, made Marian's acquaintance, and was observed by Mrs. Bray engaged in eager talk with her. Suddenly she saw him start. Something said by this quiet, gentle-mannered girl had evidently given him a shock of surprise. Afterwards, in conversation with her friends, he spoke of her "great calm soul." This is no doubt an instance of the

intense sympathetic adaptiveness of Miss Evans. If great, she was not by any means calm at this period, but inwardly deeply perturbed, yet her nature, with subtlest response, reflected the transcendental calm of the philosopher when brought within his atmosphere.

George Dawson, the popular lecturer, and Mr. Flower, were more intimately associated with the Rosehill household. The latter, then living at Stratford-on-Avon, where he was wont to entertain a vast number of people, especially Americans, who made pilgrimages to Shakespeare's birthplace, is known to the world as the benevolent denouncer of "bits and bearing-reins." One day this whole party went to hear George Dawson, who had made a great sensation at Birmingham, preach one of his thrilling sermons from the text "And the common people heard him gladly." George Eliot, alluding to these days as late as 1876, says, in a letter to Mrs. Bray:

"George Dawson was strongly associated for me with Rosehill, not to speak of the General Baptist Chapel, where we all heard him preach for the first time (to us). . . . I have a vivid recollection of an evening when Mr. and Mrs. F —— dined at your house with George Dawson, when he was going to lecture at the Mechanics' Institute, and you felt compassionately towards him, because you thought the rather riotous talk was a bad preface to his lecture. We have a Birmingham friend, whose acquaintance we made many years ago in Weimar, and from him I have occasionally had some news of Mr. Dawson. I feared, what you mention, that his life has been a little too strenuous in these latter years."

On the evening alluded to in this letter Mr. Dawson was dining at Mrs. Bray's house before giving his lecture on 'John Wesley,' at the Mechanics' Institute. His rich sarcasm and love of fun had exhilarated the whole company, and not content with merely "riotous talk," George Dawson and Mr. Flower turned themselves into lions and wild cats for the amusement of the children, suddenly pouncing out from under the table-cloth, with hideous roarings and screechings, till the hubbub became appalling, joined to the delighted half-frightened exclamations of the little ones. Mr. Dawson did the lions, and Mr. Flower, who had made personal acquaintance

with the wild cats in the backwoods of America, was inimitable in their peculiar pounce and screech.

Thus amid studies and pleasant friendly intercourse did the days pass at Rosehill. Still Marian Evans was restless, tormented, frequently in tears, perhaps unconsciously craving a wider sphere, and more definitely recognized position. However strenuously she, at a maturer time of life, inculcated the necessity of resignation, she had not then learned to resign herself. And now a change was impending — a change which, fraught with the most important consequences, was destined to give a new direction to the current of her life. Dr. John Chapman invited her to assist him in the editorship of the *Westminster Review*, which passed at that time into his hands from John Mill. They had already met, when Marian was passing through London on her way to the Continent, on some matter of business or other connected with one of her translations. Dr. Chapman's proposition was accepted ; and although Marian suffered keenly from the wrench of parting with her friends, the prompting to work out her powers to the full overcame the clinging of affection, and in the spring of 1851 she left Rosehill behind her and came to London.

CHAPTER V.

THE 'WESTMINSTER REVIEW.'

Dr. and Mrs. Chapman were at this time in the habit of admitting a few select boarders, chiefly engaged in literary pursuits, to their large house in the Strand, and Miss Evans, at their invitation, made her home with them. Thus she found herself at once in the centre of a circle consisting of some of the most advanced thinkers and brilliant *littérateurs* of the day ; a circle which, partly consisting of contributors to the *Westminster Review*, was strongly imbued with scientific tendencies, being particularly partial to the doctrines of Positive Philosophy.

Those were in truth the palmy days of the *Westminster Review*. Herbert Spencer, G. H. Lewes, John Oxenford,

James and Harriet Martineau, Charles Bray, George Combe, and Professor Edward Forbes were among the writers that made it the leading expositor of the philosophic and scientific thought of the age. It occupied a position something midway between that of the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly*. Scorning, like the latter, to pander to the frivolous tastes of the majority, it appealed to the most thoughtful and enlightened section of the reading public, giving especial prominence to the philosophy of the Comtist School; and while not so fashionable as the *Nineteenth Century*, it could boast among its contributors names quite as famous, destined as they were to become the foremost of their time and country. With this group of illustrious writers Miss Evans was now associated, and the articles she contributed from the year 1852 to 1858 are among the most brilliant examples of periodical literature. The first notice by her pen is a brief review of Carlyle's 'Life of Sterling' for January 1852, and judging from internal evidence, as regards style and method of treatment, the one on Margaret Fuller, in the next number, must be by the same hand.

To the biographer there is a curious interest in what she says in her first notice about this kind of literature, and it would be well for the world if writers were to lay it more generally to heart. "We have often wished that genius would incline itself more frequently to the task of the biographer, that when some great or good personage dies, instead of the dreary three- or five-volumed compilations of letter, and diary, and detail, little to the purpose, which two-thirds of the public have not the chance, nor the other third the inclination, to read, we could have a real 'life,' setting forth briefly and vividly the man's inward and outward struggles, aims, and achievements, so as to make clear the meaning which his experience has for his fellows. A few such lives (chiefly autobiographies) the world possesses, and they have, perhaps, been more influential on the formation of character than any other kind of reading." Then again, speaking of the 'Memoirs of Margaret Fuller,' she remarks, in reference to the same topic, "The old-world biographies present their subjects generally as broken fragments of humanity, notice-

able because of their individual peculiarities, the new-world biographies present their subjects rather as organic portions of society."

George Eliot's estimate of Margaret Fuller (for there can be little doubt that it is hers) possesses too rare an interest for readers not to be given here in her own apposite and pungent words: "We are at a loss whether to regard her as the parent or child of New England Transcendentalism. Perhaps neither the one nor the other. It was essentially an intellectual, moral, spiritual regeneration — a renewing of the whole man — a kindling of his aspirations after full development of faculty and perfect symmetry of being. Of this sect Margaret Fuller was the priestess. In conversation she was as copious and oracular as Coleridge, brilliant as Sterling, pungent and paradoxical as Carlyle; gifted with the inspired powers of a Pythoness, she saw into the hearts and over the heads of all who came near her, and, but for a sympathy as boundless as her self-esteem, she would have despised the whole human race! Her frailty in this respect was no secret either to herself or her friends. . . . We must say that from the time she became a mother till the final tragedy when she perished with her husband and child within sight of her native shore, she was an altered woman, and evinced a greatness of soul and heroism of character so grand and subduing, that we feel disposed to extend to her whole career the admiration and sympathy inspired by the closing scenes.

"While her reputation was at its height in the literary circles of Boston and New York, she was so self-conscious that her life seemed to be a studied act, rather than a spontaneous growth; but this was the mere flutter on the surface; the well was deep, and the spring genuine; and it is creditable to her friends, as well as to herself, that such at all times was their belief."

In this striking summing-up of a character, the penetrating observer of human nature — taking in at a glance and depicting by a few masterly touches all that helps to make up a picture of the real living being — begins to reveal herself.

These essays in the *Westminster Review* are not only capital reading in themselves, but are, of course, doubly

attractive to us because they let out opinions, views, judgments of things and authors, which we should never otherwise have known. Marian Evans had not yet hidden herself behind the mask of George Eliot, and in many of these wise and witty utterances of hers we are admitted behind the scenes of her mind, so to speak, and see her in her own undisguised person — before she had assumed the *rôle* of the novelist, showing herself to the world mainly through her dramatic impersonations.

In these articles, written in the fresh maturity of her powers, we learn what George Eliot thought about many subjects. We learn who were her favorite authors in fiction; what opinions she held on art and poetry; what was her attitude towards the political and social questions of the day; what was her conception of human life in general. There is much here, no doubt, that one might have been prepared to find, but a good deal, too, that comes upon one with the freshness of surprise.

A special interest attaches naturally to what she has to say about her own branch of art — the novel. Though she had probably no idea that she was herself destined to become one of the great masters of fiction, she had evidently a special predilection for works of that kind, noticeable because hitherto her bent might have appeared almost exclusively towards philosophy. To the three-volume circulating-library novel of the ordinary stamp she is merciless in her sarcasm. One of her most pithy articles of this time, or rather later, its date being 1856, is directed against "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists." "These," she says, "consist of the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic. But it is a mixture of all these — a composite order of feminine fatuity — that produces the largest class of such novels, which we shall distinguish as the *mind and millinery* species. We had imagined that destitute women turned novelists, as they turned governesses, because they had no other 'ladylike' means of getting their bread. Empty writing was excused by an empty stomach, and twaddle was consecrated by tears. . . . It is clear that they write in elegant boudoirs, with violet-colored ink and a ruby pen; that they must be entirely indifferent to pub-

lishers' accounts; and inexperienced in every form of poverty except poverty of brains."

After finding fault with what she sarcastically calls the *white neck-cloth* species of novel, "a sort of medical sweetmeat for Low Church young ladies," she adds, "The real drama of Evangelicalism, and it has abundance of fine drama for any one who has genius enough to discern and reproduce it, lies among the middle and lower classes. Why can we not have pictures of religious life among the industrial classes in England, as interesting as Mrs. Stowe's pictures of religious life among the negroes?"

She who asked that question was herself destined, a few years later, to answer her own demand in most triumphant fashion. Already here and there we find hints and suggestions of the vein that was to be so fully worked out in 'Scenes of Clerical Life' and 'Adam Bede.' Her intimate knowledge of English country life, and the hold it had on her imagination, every now and then eats its way to the surface of her writings, and stands out amongst its surrounding matter with a certain unmistakable native force. After censuring the lack of reality with which peasant life is commonly treated in art, she makes the following apposite remarks, suggested by her own experience: "The notion that peasants are joyous, that the typical moment to represent a man in a smock-frock is when he is cracking a joke and showing a row of sound teeth, that cottage matrons are usually buxom, and village children necessarily rosy and merry, are prejudices difficult to dislodge from the artistic mind which looks for its subjects into literature instead of life. The painter is still under the influence of idyllic literature, which has always expressed the imagination of the town-bred rather than the truth of rustic life. Idyllic ploughmen are jocund when they drive their team afield; idyllic shepherds make bashful love under hawthorn bushes; idyllic villagers dance in the chequered shade, and refresh themselves not immoderately with spicy nut-brown ale. But no one who has seen much of actual ploughmen thinks them jocund, no one who is well acquainted with the English peasantry can pronounce them merry. The slow gaze, in which no sense of beauty

beams, no humor twinkles; the slow utterance, and the heavy slouching walk, remind one rather of that melancholy animal the camel, than of the sturdy countryman, with striped stockings, red waistcoat, and hat aside, who represents the traditional English peasant. Observe a company of haymakers. When you see them at a distance tossing up the forkfuls of hay in the golden light, while the wagon creeps slowly with its increasing burden over the meadow, and the bright green space which tells of work done gets larger and larger, you pronounce the scene 'smiling,' and you think these companions in labor must be as bright and cheerful as the picture to which they give animation. Approach nearer and you will find haymaking time is a time for joking, especially if there are women among the laborers; but the coarse laugh that bursts out every now and then, and expresses the triumphant taunt, is as far as possible from your conception of idyllic merriment. That delicious effervescence of the mind which we call fun has no equivalent for the northern peasant, except tipsy revelry; the only realm of fancy and imagination for the English clown exists at the bottom of the third quart pot.

"The conventional countryman of the stage, who picks up pocket-books and never looks into them, and who is too simple even to know that honesty has its opposite, represents the still lingering mistake, that an unintelligible dialect is a guarantee for ingenuousness, and that slouching shoulders indicate an upright disposition. It is quite sure that a thresher is likely to be innocent of any adroit arithmetical cheating, but he is not the less likely to carry home his master's corn in his shoes and pocket; a reaper is not given to writing begging letters, but he is quite capable of cajoling the dairy-maid into filling his small beer bottle with ale. The selfish instincts are not subdued by the sight of buttercups, nor is integrity in the least established by that classic rural occupation, sheep-washing. To make men moral something more is requisite than to turn them out to grass."

Every one must see that this is the essay-writing of a novelist rather than of a moral philosopher. The touches are put on with the vigor of a Velasquez. Balzac, or Flaubert, or

that most terrible writer of the modern French school of fiction, the author of 'Le Sabot Rouge,' never described peasant life with more downright veracity. In the eyes of Miss Evans this quality of veracity is the most needful of all for the artist. Because "a picture of human life, such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of sentiment." For "art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contract with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot. All the more sacred is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the life of the People. Falsification here is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life. It is not so very serious that we should have false ideas about evanescent fashions — about the manners and conversation of beaux and duchesses; but it *is* serious that our sympathy with the perennial joys and struggles, the toil, the tragedy, and the humor in the life of our more heavily laden fellow-men should be perverted, and turned towards a false object instead of a true one."

George Eliot afterwards faithfully adhered to the canons fixed by the critic. Whether this consciousness of a moral purpose was altogether a gain to her art may be more fitly discussed in connection with the analysis of her works of fiction. It is only needful to point out here how close and binding she wished to make the union between ethics and æsthetics.

Almost identical views concerning fundamental laws of Art are discussed in an equally terse, vigorous, and pictorial manner in an article called 'Realism in Art: Recent German Fiction.' This article, however, is not by George Eliot, but by George Henry Lewes. It was published in October, 1858, and appeared after their joint sojourn in Germany during the spring and summer of that year. I think that if one carefully compares 'Realism in Art' with George Eliot's other articles, there appears something like a marriage of their respective styles in this paper. It seems probable that Lewes, with his flexible adaptiveness, had come under the influence of George Eliot's powerful intellect, and that many of the

views he expresses here at the same time render George Eliot's, as they frequently appear, identical with hers. In the article in question the manner as well as the matter has a certain suggestion of the novelist's style. For example, she frequently indicates the quality of human speech by its resemblance to musical sounds. She is fond of speaking of "the *staccato* tones of a voice," "an *adagio* of utter indifference," and in the above-mentioned essay there are such expressions as the "stately *largo*" of good German prose. Again, in the article in question, we find the following satirical remarks about the slovenly prose of the generality of German writers: "To be gentlemen of somewhat slow, sluggish minds is perhaps their misfortune; but to be writers deplorably deficient in the first principles of composition is assuredly their fault. Some men pasture on platitudes, as oxen upon meadow-grass; they are at home on a dead-level of common-place, and do not desire to be irradiated by a felicity of expression." And in another passage to the same effect the author says sarcastically, "Graces are gifts: it can no more be required of a professor that he should write with felicity than that he should charm all beholders with his personal appearance; but literature requires that he should write intelligibly and carefully, as society requires that he should wash his face and button his waistcoat." Some of these strictures are very similar in spirit to what George Eliot had said in her review of Heinrich Heine, published in 1856, where, complaining of the general cumbrousness of German writers, she makes the following cutting remark: "A German comedy is like a German sentence: you see no reason in its structure why it should ever come to an end, and you accept the conclusion as an arrangement of Providence rather than of the author."

A passage in this article, which exactly tallies with George Eliot's general remarks on Art, must not be omitted here. "Art is a representation of Reality — a Representation, inasmuch as it is not the thing itself, but only represents it, must necessarily be limited by the nature of its medium. . . . Realism is thus the basis of all Art, and its antithesis is not Idealism but Falsism. . . . To misrepresent the forms of

ordinary life is no less an offence than to misrepresent the forms of ideal life: a pug-nosed Apollo, or Jupiter in a great-coat, would not be more truly shocking to an artistic mind than are those senseless falsifications of Nature into which incompetence is led under the pretence of 'beautifying' Nature. Either give us true peasants or leave them untouched; either paint no drapery at all, or paint it with the utmost fidelity; either keep your people silent, or make them speak the idiom of their class."

Among German novelists (or rather writers of short stories), Paul Heyse is one of the few who is singled out for special praise in this review. And it is curious that there should be a tale by this eminent author called 'The Lonely Ones' (which also appeared in 1858), in which an incident occurs forcibly recalling the catastrophe of Grandcourt's death in 'Daniel Deronda': the incident — although unskilfully introduced — of a Neapolitan fisherman whose momentary murderous hesitation to rescue his drowning friend ends in lifelong remorse for his death.

What makes the article in question particularly interesting are the allusions to the German tour, which give it an almost biographical interest. As has been mentioned already, Mr. Lewes and George Eliot were travelling in Germany in the spring of 1858, and in a letter to a friend she writes: "Then we had a delicious journey to Salzburg, and from thence through the Salz-Kammergut to Vienna, from Vienna to Prague, and from Prague to Dresden, where we spent our last six weeks in quiet work and quiet worship of the Madonna." And in his essay on Art Mr. G. H. Lewes alludes to the most priceless art-treasure Dresden contains, "Raphael's marvellous picture, the Madonna di San Sisto," as furnishing the most perfect illustration of what he means by Realism and Idealism. Speaking of the child Jesus he says: "In the never-to-be-forgotten divine babe, we have at once the intensest realism of presentation with the highest idealism of conception: the attitude is at once grand, easy, and natural; the face is that of a child, but the child is divine: in those eyes and in that brow there is an indefinable something which, greater than the expression of the angels, grander than that of

pope or saint, is to all who see it a perfect *truth;* we feel that humanity in its highest conceivable form is before us, and that to transcend such a form would be to lose sight of the *human* nature there represented." A similar passage occurs in 'The Mill on the Floss,' where Philip Wakem says: "The greatest of painters only once painted a mysteriously divine child; he could n't have told how he did it, and we can't tell why we feel it to be divine."

Enough has probably been quoted from George Eliot's articles to give the reader some idea of her views on art. But they are so rich in happy aphorisms, originality of illustration, and raciness of epithet that they not only deserve attentive study because they were the first fruits of the mind that afterwards gave to the world such noble and perfect works as 'The Mill on the Floss' and 'Silas Marner,' but are well worth attention for their own sake. Indeed, nothing in George Eliot's fictions excels the style of these papers. And what a clear, incisive, masterly style it was! Her prose in those days had a swiftness of movement, an epigrammatic felicity, and a brilliancy of antithesis which we look for in vain in the over-elaborate sentences and somewhat ponderous wit of 'Theophrastus Such.'

A very vapid paper on 'Weimar and its Celebrities,' April 1859, which a writer in the *Academy* attributes to the same hand, I know not on what authority, does not possess a single attribute that we are in the habit of associating with the writings of George Eliot. That an author who, by that time, had already produced some of her very finest work, namely, the 'Scenes of Clerical Life' and 'Adam Bede,' should have been responsible simultaneously for the trite common-places ventilated in this article is simply incredible. It is true that Homer is sometimes found nodding, and the right-hand of the greatest master may forget its cunning, but would George Eliot in her most abject moments have been capable of penning such a sentence as this in connection with Goethe? "Would not Fredricka of Lili have been a more genial companion than Christina Vulpius for that great poet of whom his native land is so justly proud?" It is not worth while to point out other platitudes such as flow spontaneously from the

facile pen of a penny-a-liner; but the consistent misspelling of every name may be alluded to in passing. Thus we read "Lily" for "Lely," "Zetter" for "Zelter," "Quintus Filein" for "Fixlein," "Einsedel" for "Einsiedel," etc. etc. This in itself would furnish no conclusive argument, supposing George Eliot to have been on the Continent and out of the way of correcting proofs. But as it happened she was in England in April 1859, and it is, therefore, on all grounds impossible that this worthless production should be hers.

Perhaps her two most noteworthy articles are the one called 'Evangelical Teaching,' published in 1855, and the other on 'Worldliness and Other-Worldliness,' which appeared in 1857. This happy phrase, by the way, was first used by Coleridge, who says, "As there is a worldliness or the too much of this life, so there is another *worldliness* or rather *other worldliness* equally hateful and selfish with *this worldliness*." These articles are curious because they seem to occupy a midway position between George Eliot's earliest and latest phase of religious belief. But at this period she still felt the recoil from the pressure of a narrowing dogmatism too freshly not to launch back at it some of the most stinging shafts from the armory of her satire. Not Heine himself, in his trenchant sallies, surpasses the irony with which some of her pages are bristling. To ignore this stage in George Eliot's mental development would be to lose one of the connecting links in her history: a history by no means smooth and uneventful, as sometimes superficially represented, but full of strong contrasts, abrupt transitions, outward and inward changes sympathetically charged with all the meaning of this transitional time. Two extracts from the above-mentioned articles will amply testify to what has just been said.

"Given a man with a moderate intellect, a moral standard not higher than the average, some rhetorical affluence and great glibness of speech, what is the career in which, without the aid of birth or money, he may most easily attain power and reputation in English society? Where is that Goshen of intellectual mediocrity in which a smattering of science and learning will pass for profound instruction, where platitudes will be accepted as wisdom, bigoted narrowness as holy zeal,

unctuous egoism as God-given piety? Let such a man become an evangelical preacher; he will then find it possible to reconcile small ability with great ambition, superficial knowledge with the prestige of erudition, a middling morale with a high reputation for sanctity. Let him shun practical extremes, and be ultra only in what is purely theoretic. Let him be stringent on predestination, but latitudinarian on fasting; unflinching in insisting on the eternity of punishment, but diffident of curtailing the substantial comforts of time; ardent and imaginative on the pre-millennial advent of Christ, but cold and cautious towards every other infringement of the *status quo*. Let him fish for souls, not with the bait of inconvenient singularity, but with the drag-net of comfortable conformity. Let him be hard and literal in his interpretation only when he wants to hurl texts at the heads of unbelievers and adversaries, but when the letter of the Scriptures presses too closely on the genteel Christianity of the nineteenth century, let him use his spiritualizing alembic and disperse it into impalpable ether. Let him preach less of Christ than of Antichrist; let him be less definite in showing what sin is than in showing who is the Man of Sin; less expansive on the blessedness of faith than on the accursedness of infidelity. Above all, let him set up as an interpreter of prophecy, rival 'Moore's Almanack' in the prediction of political events, tickling the interest of hearers who are but moderately spiritual by showing how the Holy Spirit has dictated problems and charades for their benefit; and how, if they are ingenious enough to solve these, they may have their Christian graces nourished by learning precisely to whom they may point as 'the horn that had eyes,' 'the lying prophet,' and the 'unclean spirits.' In this way he will draw men to him by the strong cords of their passions, made reason-proof by being baptized with the name of piety. In this way he may gain a metropolitan pulpit; the avenues to his church will be as crowded as the passages to the opera; he has but to print his prophetic sermons, and bind them in lilac and gold, and they will adorn the drawing-room table of all evangelical ladies, who will regard as a sort of pious 'light reading' the demonstration that the prophecy of the locusts, whose sting is in their tail, is fulfilled in the fact of the

Turkish commander having taken a horse's tail for his standard, and that the French are the very frogs predicted in the Revelations."

Even more scathing than this onslaught on a certain type of the popular evangelical preacher, is the paper on the poet Young, one of the wittiest things from George Eliot's pen, wherein she castigates with all her powers of sarcasm and ridicule that class of believers who cannot vilify this life sufficiently in order to make sure of the next, and who, in the care of their own souls, are careless of the world's need. Her analysis of the 'Night Thoughts' remains one of the most brilliant criticisms of its kind. Young's contempt for this earth, of all of us, and his exaltation of the starry worlds above, especially provoke his reviewer's wrath. This frame of mind was always repulsive to George Eliot, who could never sufficiently insist on the need of man's concentrating his love and energy on the life around him. She never felt much toleration for that form of aspiration that would soar to some shadowy infinite beyond the circle of human fellowship. One of the most epigrammatic passages in this article is where she says of Young, "No man can be better fitted for an Established Church. He personifies completely her nice balance of temporalities and spiritualities. He is equally impressed with the momentousness of death and of burial fees; he languishes at once for immortal life and for 'livings;' he has a fervid attachment to patrons in general, but on the whole prefers the Almighty. He will teach, with something more than official conviction, the nothingness of earthly things; and he will feel something more than private disgust, if his meritorious efforts in directing men's attention to another world are not rewarded by substantial preferment in this. His secular man believes in cambric bands and silk stockings as characteristic attire for 'an ornament of religion and virtue;' he hopes courtiers will never forget to copy Sir Robert Walpole; and writes begging letters to the king's mistress. His spiritual man recognizes no motives more familiar than Golgotha and 'the skies;' it walks in graveyards, or soars among the stars. . . . If it were not for the prospect of immortality, he considers it would be wise and agreeable to be indecent, or to

murder one's father; and, heaven apart, it would be extremely irrational in any man not to be a knave. Man, he thinks, is a compound of the angel and the brute; the brute is to be humbled by being reminded of its 'relation to the stars,' and frightened into moderation by the contemplation of death-beds and skulls; the angel is to be developed by vituperating this world and exalting the next, and by this double process you get the Christian — 'the highest style of man.' With all this our new-made divine is an unmistakable poet. To a clay compounded chiefly of the worldling and the rhetorician there is added a real spark of Promethean fire. He will one day clothe his apostrophes and objurgations, his astronomical religion and his charnel-house morality, in lasting verse, which will stand, like a Juggernaut made of gold and jewels, at once magnificent and repulsive: for this divine is Edward Young, the future author of the 'Night Thoughts.'"

It has seemed appropriate to quote thus largely from these essays, because, never having been reprinted, they are to all intents and purposes inaccessible to the general reader. Yet they contain much that should not willingly be consigned to the dust and cobwebs, among which obsolete magazines usually sink into oblivion. They may as well be specified here according to their dates. 'Carlyle's Life of Sterling,' January 1852; 'Woman in France: Madame de Sablé,' October 1854; 'Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming,' October 1855; 'German Wit: Heinrich Heine,' January 1856; 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,' October 1856; 'The Natural History of German Life,' July 1856; and 'Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: the Poet Young,' January 1857.

Miss Evans's main employment on the *Westminster Review* was, however, editorial. She used to write a considerable portion of the summary of contemporary literature at the end of each number. But her co-operation as sub-editor ceased about the close of 1853, when she left Dr. Chapman's house, and went to live in apartments in a small house in Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park. Marian Evans was not entirely dependent at this time on the proceeds of her literary work, her father having settled the sum of 80*l.* to 100*l.* a year on her for life, the capital of which, however, did not belong to her. She

was very generous with her money; and although her earnings at this time were not considerable, they were partly spent on her poor relations.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE HENRY LEWES.

Meanwhile, these literary labors were pleasantly diversified by frequent visits to her friends at Rosehill and elsewhere. In October 1852, she stayed with Mr. and Mrs. George Combe at Edinburgh, and on her way back was the guest of Harriet Martineau, at her delightfully situated house in Ambleside. Her acquaintance with Mr. Herbert Spencer had ripened into a cordial friendship. They met constantly both in London and in the country, and their intercourse was a source of mutual intellectual enjoyment and profit. As must already have become evident, it is erroneous to suppose that he had any share in the formation of her mind: for as Mr. Herbert Spencer said, in a letter to the *Daily News*, "Our friendship did not commence until 1851 . . . when she was already distinguished by that breadth of culture, and universality of power, which have since made her known to all the world."

In a letter to Miss Phelps, George Eliot touches on this rumor, after alluding in an unmistakable manner to another great contemporary: "I never — to answer one of your questions quite directly — I never had any personal acquaintance with" (naming a prominent Positivist); "never saw him to my knowledge, except in the House of Commons; and though I have studied his books, especially his 'Logic' and 'Political Economy,' with much benefit, I have no consciousness of their having made any marked epoch in my life.

"Of Mr. ——'s friendship I have had the honor and advantage for twenty years, but I believe that every main bias of my mind had been taken before I knew him. Like the rest of his readers, I am, of course, indebted to him for much enlargement and clarifying of thought."

But there was another acquaintance which Miss Evans made during the first year of her residence in the Strand, destined to affect the whole future tenor of her life — the acquaintance of Mr. George Henry Lewes, then, like her, a contributor to the *Westminster Review*.

George Henry Lewes was Marian's senior by two years, having been born in London on the 18th of April, 1817. He was educated at Greenwich in a school once possessing a high reputation for thoroughly "grounding" its pupils in a knowledge of the classics. When his education was so far finished, he was placed as clerk in a merchant's office. This kind of occupation proving very distasteful, he turned medical student for a time. Very early in life he was attracted towards philosophy, for at the age of nineteen we find him attending the weekly meetings of a small club, in the habit of discussing metaphysical problems in the parlor of a tavern in Red Lion Square, Holborn. This club, from which the one in 'Daniel Deronda' is supposed to have borrowed many of its features, was the point of junction for a most heterogeneous company. Here, amicably seated round the fire, a speculative tailor would hob and nob with some medical student deep in anatomy; a second-hand bookseller having devoured the literature on his shelves, ventilated their contents for the general benefit; and a discursive American mystic was listened to in turn with a Jewish journeyman watchmaker deeply imbued with Spinozism. It is impossible not to connect this Jew, named Cohen, and described as "a man of astonishing subtilty and logical force, no less than of sweet personal worth," with the Mordecai of the novel just mentioned. However wide the after divergencies, here evidently lies the germ. The weak eyes and chest, the grave and gentle demeanor, the whole ideality of character, correspond. In some respects G. H. Lewes was the "Daniel Deronda" to this "Mordecai." For he not only loved but venerated his "great calm intellect." "An immense pity," says Mr. Lewes, "a fervid indignation, filled me as I came away from his attics in one of the Holborn courts, where I had seen him in the pinching poverty of his home, with his German wife and two little black-eyed children."

To this pure-spirited suffering watchmaker, Lewes owed his

first acquaintance with Spinoza. A certain passage, casually cited by Cohen, awakened an eager thirst for more in the youth. The desire to possess himself of Spinoza's works, still in the odor of pestilential heresy, haunted him like a passion. For he himself, then "suffering the social persecution which embitters any departure from accepted creeds," felt in defiant sympathy with all outcasts. On a dreary November evening, the coveted volumes were at length discovered on the dingy shelves of a second-hand bookseller. By the flaring gaslight, young Lewes, with a beating heart, read on the back of a small brown quarto those thrilling words, 'Spinoza: Opera Posthuma!' He was poor in those days, and the price of the volume was twenty shillings, but he would gladly have sacrificed his last sixpence to secure it. Having paid his money with feverish delight, he hurried home in triumph, and immediately set to work on a translation of the 'Ethics,' which, however, he was too impatient to finish.

This little incident is well worth dwelling upon not only as being the first introduction of a notable thinker to philosophy, but as showing the eager impulsive nature of the man. The study of Spinoza led to his publishing an article on his life and works in the *Westminster Review* of 1843, almost the first account of the great Hebrew philosopher which appeared in this country. This article, afterwards incorporated in the 'Biographical History of Philosophy,' formed the nucleus, I believe, of that "admirable piece of synthetic criticism and exposition," as Mr. Frederic Harrison calls it; a work which, according to him, has influenced the thought of the present generation almost more than any single book except Mr. Mill's 'Logic.'

Before the appearance of either article or 'History of Philosophy,' Mr. Lewes went to Germany, and devoted himself to the study of its language and literature, just brought into fashion by Carlyle. Returning to England in 1839, he became one of the most prolific journalists of the day. Witty, brilliant, and many-sided, he seemed pre-eminently fitted by nature for a press-writer and *littérateur*. His versatility was so amazing, that a clever talker once said of him: "Lewes can do everything in the world but paint; and he could do

that, too, after a week's study." At this time, besides assisting in the editorship of the *Classical Museum*, he wrote for the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Athenæum*, the *Edinburgh*, *Foreign Quarterly*, *British Quarterly*, *Blackwood*, *Fraser*, and the *Westminster Review*. After publishing 'A Biographical History of Philosophy,' through Mr. Knight's 'Weekly Volumes' in 1846, he wrote two novels, 'Ranthorpe,' and 'Rose, Blanche, and Violet,' which successively appeared in 1847 and 1848. But fiction was not his *forte*, these two productions being singularly crude and immature as compared with his excellent philosophical work. Some jokes in the papers about "rant" killed what little life there was in 'Ranthorpe.' Nevertheless, Charlotte Brontë, who had some correspondence with Mr. Lewes about 1847, actually wrote about it as follows: "In reading 'Ranthorpe,' I have read a new book, not a reprint, not a reflection of any other book, but a *new book*." Another great writer, Edgar Poe, admired it no less, for he says of the work: "I have lately read it with deep interest, and derived great *consolation* from it also. It relates to the career of a literary man, and gives a just view of the true aims and the true dignity of the literary character."

'The Spanish Drama;' 'The Life of Maximilian Robespierre, with extracts from his unpublished correspondence;' 'The Noble Heart: a Tragedy;' all followed in close succession from the same inexhaustible pen. The last, it was said, proved also a tragedy to the publishers. But not content with writing dramas, Mr. Lewes was also ambitious of the fame of an actor, the theatre having always possessed a strong fascination for him. Already as a child he had haunted the theatres, and now, while delivering a lecture at the Philosophical Institution in Edinburgh, he shocked its staid *habitués* not a little by immediately afterwards appearing on the stage in the character of Shylock: so many, and seemingly incompatible, were Lewes's pursuits. But this extreme mobility of mind, this intellectual tripping from subject to subject, retarded the growth of his popularity. The present mechanical subdivision of labor has most unfortunately also affected the judgment passed on literary and artistic products. Let a man once have written a novel typical of the manners

and ways of a certain class of English society, or painted a picture with certain peculiar effects of sea or landscape, or composed a poem affecting the very trick and language of some bygone mediæval singer, he will be doomed, to the end of his days, to do the same thing over and over again, *ad nauseam*. Nothing can well be more deadening to any vigorous mental life, and Mr. Lewes set a fine example of intellectual disinterestedness in sacrificing immediate success to the free play of a most variously endowed nature.

The public too was a gainer by this. For the 'Life of Goethe' could not have been made the rich, comprehensive, many-sided biography it is, had Mr. Lewes himself not tried his hand at such a variety of subjects. This life, begun in 1845, the result partly of his sojourn in Germany, did not appear in print until 1855. Ultimately destined to a great and lasting success, the MS. of the 'Life of Goethe' was ignominiously sent from one publisher to another, until at last Mr. David Nutt, of the Strand, showed his acumen by giving it to the reading world.

Some years before the publication of this biography, Mr. Lewes had also been one of the founders of that able but unsuccessful weekly, the *Leader*, of which he was the literary editor from 1849 to 1854. Many of his articles on Auguste Comte were originally written for this paper, and afterwards collected into a volume for Bohn's series. Indeed, after Mr. John Stuart Mill, he is to be regarded as the earliest exponent of Positivism in England. He not only considered the '*Cours de Philosophie Positive*' the greatest work of the century, but believed it would "form one of the mighty landmarks in the history of opinion. No one before M. Comte," he says, "ever dreamed of treating social problems otherwise than upon theological or metaphysical methods. He first showed how possible, nay, how imperative, it was that social questions should be treated on the same footing with all other scientific questions. This being his object, he was forced to detect the law of mental evolution before he could advance. This law is the law of historical progression." But while Mr. Lewes, with his talent for succinct exposition, helped more than any other Englishman to disseminate the prin-

ciples of Comte's philosophy in this country, he was at the same time violently opposed to his '*Politique Positive*,' with its schemes of social reorganization.

Even so slight a survey as this must show the astonishing discursiveness of Mr. Lewes's intellect. By the time he was thirty he had already tried his hand at criticism, fiction, biography, the drama, and philosophy. He had enlarged his experience of human nature by foreign travel; he had addressed audiences from the lecturer's platform; he had enjoyed the perilous sweets of editing a newspaper; he had even, it is said, played the harlequin in a company of strolling actors. Indeed, Mr. Thackeray was once heard to say that it would not surprise him to meet Lewes in Piccadilly, riding on a white elephant; whilst another wit likened him to the Wandering Jew, as you could never tell where he was going to turn up, or what he was going to do next.

In this discursiveness of intellect he more nearly resembled the Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century than the men of his own time. Indeed, his personal appearance, temperament, manners, general tone of thought, seemed rather to be those of a highly accomplished foreigner than of an Englishman. He was a lightly built, fragile man, with bushy curly hair, and a general shagginess of beard and eyebrow not unsuggestive of a Skye terrier. For the rest, he had a prominent mouth and gray, deeply set eyes under an ample, finely proportioned forehead. Volatile by nature, somewhat wild and lawless in his talk, he in turn delighted and shocked his friends by the gayety, recklessness, and genial *abandon* of his manners and conversation. His companionship was singularly stimulating, for the commonest topic served him as a starting-point for the lucid development of some pet philosophical theory. In this gift of making abstruse problems intelligible, and difficult things easy, he had some resemblance to the late W. K. Clifford, with his magical faculty of illuminating the most abstruse subjects by his vivid directness of exposition.

As Lewes's life was so soon to be closely united to that of Marian Evans, this cursory sketch of his career will not seem inappropriate. At the time they met at Dr. Chapman's house,

Mr. Lewes, who had married early in life, found his conjugal relations irretrievably spoiled. How far the blame of this might attach to one side or to the other does not concern us here. Enough that in the intercourse with a woman of such astonishing intellect, varied acquirements, and rare sympathy, Mr. Lewes discovered a community of ideas and a moral support that had been sadly lacking to his existence hitherto.

In many ways these two natures, so opposite in character, disposition, and tone of mind, who, from such different starting-points had reached the same standpoint, seemed to need each other for the final fruition and utmost development of what was best in each. A crisis was now impending in Marian's life. She was called upon to make her private judgment a law unto herself, and to shape her actions, not according to the recognized moral standard of her country, but in harmony with her own convictions of right and wrong. From a girl, it appears, she had held independent views about marriage, strongly advocating the German divorce laws. On the appearance of 'Jane Eyre,' when every one was talking of this book and praising the exemplary conduct of Jane in her famous interview with Rochester, Marian Evans, then only four-and-twenty, remarked to a friend that in his position she considered him justified in contracting a fresh marriage. And in an article on Madame Sablé, written as early as 1854, there is this significant passage in reference to the "laxity of opinion and practice with regard to the marriage-tie in France." "Heaven forbid," she writes, "that we should enter on a defence of French morals, most of all in relation to marriage! But it is undeniable that unions formed in the maturity of thought and feeling, and grounded only on inherent fitness and mutual attraction, tended to bring women into more intelligent sympathy with man, and to heighten and complicate their share in the political drama. The quiescence and security of the conjugal relation are, doubtless, favorable to the manifestation of the highest qualities by persons who have already attained a high standard of culture, but rarely foster a passion sufficient to rouse all the faculties to aid in winning or retaining its beloved object — to convert indolence

into activity, indifference into ardent partisanship, dulness into perspicuity."

Such a union, formed in the full maturity of thought and feeling, was now contracted by Marian Evans and George Henry Lewes. Legal union, however, there could be none, for though virtually separated from his wife, Mr. Lewes could not get a divorce. Too little has as yet transpired concerning this important step to indicate more than the bare outline of events. Enough that Mr. Lewes appears to have written a letter in which, after a full explanation of his circumstances, he used all his powers of persuasion to win Miss Evans for his life-long companion; that she consented, after having satisfied her conscience that in reality she was not injuring the claims of others; and that henceforth she bore Mr. Lewes's name, and became his wife in every sense but the legal one.

This proceeding caused the utmost consternation amongst her acquaintances, especially amongst her friends at Rosehill. The former intimate and affectionate intercourse with Mrs. Bray and her sister was only gradually restored, and only after they had come to realize how perfectly her own conscience had been consulted and satisfied in the matter. Miss Hennell, who had already entered on the scheme of religious doctrine which ever since she has been setting forth in her printed works, "swerved nothing from her own principles that the maintenance of a conventional form of marriage (remoulded to the demands of the present age) is essentially attached to all religion, and pre-eminently so to the religion of the future."

In thus defying public opinion, and forming a connection in opposition to the laws of society, George Eliot must have undergone some trials and sufferings peculiarly painful to one so shrinkingly sensitive as herself. Conscious of no wrong-doing, enjoying the rare happiness of completest intellectual fellowship in the man she loved, the step she had taken made a gap between her kindred and herself which could not but gall her clinging, womanly nature. To some of her early companions, indeed, who had always felt a certain awe at the imposing gravity of her manners, this dereliction from what

appeared to them the path of duty was almost as startling and unexpected as if they had seen the heavens falling down.

How far the individual can ever be justified in following the dictates of his private judgment, in opposition to the laws and prevalent opinions of his time and country, must remain a question no less difficult than delicate of decision. It is precisely the point where the highest natures and the lowest sometimes apparently meet; since to act in opposition to custom may be due to the loftiest motives — may be the spiritual exaltation of the reformer, braving social ostracism for the sake of an idea, or may spring, on the other hand, from purely rebellious promptings of an anti-social egoism, which recognizes no law higher than that of personal gratification. At the same time, it seems that no progress could well be made in the evolution of society without these departures on the part of individuals from the well-beaten tracks, for even the failures help eventually towards a fuller recognition of what is beneficial and possible of attainment. Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley, George Sand, the New England Transcendentalists, with their communistic experiment at Brook Farm, all more or less strove to be path-finders to a better and happier state of society. George Eliot, however, hardly belonged to this order of mind. Circumstances prompted her to disregard one of the most binding laws of society, yet, while she considered herself justified in doing so, her sympathies were, on the whole, more enlisted in the state of things as they are than as they might be. It is certainly curious that the woman, who in her own life had followed such an independent course, severing herself in many ways from her past with all its traditional sanctities, should yet so often inculcate the very opposite teaching in her works — should inculcate an almost slavish adherence to whatever surroundings, beliefs, and family ties a human being may be born to.

I need only add here that Mr. Lewes and Marian went to Germany soon after forming this union, which, only ending by death, gave to each what had hitherto been lacking in their lives. Many marriages solemnized in a church, and ushered in with all the ostentation of *trousseau*, bridesmaids, and wedding breakfast, are indeed less essentially such in all the

deeper human aspects which this relation implies, than the one contracted in this informal manner. Indeed, to those who saw them together, it seemed as if they could never be apart. Yet, while so entirely at one, each respected the other's individuality, his own, at the same time, gaining in strength by the contact. Mr. Lewes's mercurial disposition now assumed a stability greatly enhancing his brilliant talents, and for the first time facilitating that concentration of intellect so necessary for the production of really lasting philosophic work. On the other hand, George Eliot's still dormant faculties were roused and stimulated to the utmost by the man to whom this union with her formed the most memorable year of his life. By his enthusiastic belief in her he gave her the only thing she wanted — a thorough belief in herself. Indeed, he was more than a husband: he was, as an intimate friend once pithily remarked, a very mother to her. Tenderly watching over her delicate health, cheering the grave tenor of her thoughts by his inexhaustible buoyancy, jealously shielding her from every adverse breath of criticism, Mr. Lewes in a manner created the spiritual atmosphere in which George Eliot could best put forth all the flowers and fruits of her genius.

In joining her life with that of Mr. Lewes, the care of his three children devolved upon George Eliot, who henceforth showed them the undeviating love and tenderness of a mother. One of the sons had gone out to Natal as a young man, and contracted a fatal disease, which, complicated with some accident, resulted in an untimely death. He returned home a hopeless invalid, and his tedious illness was cheered by the affectionate tendance of her who had for so many years acted a mother's part towards him.

CHAPTER VII.

SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE.

As has already been mentioned, Mr. Lewes and Marian went to Germany in 1854, dividing the year between Berlin, Munich, and Weimar. In the latter pleasant little Saxon

city, on which the mighty influence of Goethe seemed still visibly resting, as the reflection of the sun lingers in the sky long after the sun himself has set, Lewes partly re-wrote his 'Life of Goethe.' Here must have been spent many delightful days, wandering in Goethe's track, exploring the beautiful neighborhood, and enjoying some of the most cultivated society in Germany. Several articles on German life and literature, afterwards published in the *Westminster Review*, were probably written at this time. The translation of Spinoza's 'Ethics' by George Eliot was also executed in the same year. Mr. Lewes, alluding to it in 'Goethe's Life,' says, in a foot-note, "It may interest some readers to learn that Spinoza will ere long appear in English, edited by the writer of these lines." This was a delusive promise, since the translation has not yet made its appearance. But surely its publication would now be warmly welcomed.

The time, however, was approaching when George Eliot was at last to discover where her real mastery lay. And this is the way, as the story goes, that she discovered it. They had returned from the Continent and were settled again in London, both actively engaged in literature. But literature, unless in certain cases of triumphant popularity, is perhaps the worst paid of all work. Mr. Lewes and George Eliot were not too well off. The former, infinite in resources, having himself tried every form of literature in turn, could not fail to notice the matchless power of observation, and the memory matching it in power, of the future novelist. One day an idea struck him. "My dear," he said, "I think you could write a capital story." Shortly afterwards there was some dinner engagement, but as he was preparing to go out, she said, "I won't go out this evening, and when you come in don't disturb me. I shall be very busy." And this was how the 'Scenes of Clerical Life' came first to be written! On being shown a portion of the first tale, 'Amos Barton,' Mr. Lewes was fairly amazed.

Stories are usually fabricated after the event; but, if not true, they often truly paint a situation. And the general testimony of friends seems to agree that it was Mr. Lewes who first incited the gifted woman, of whose great powers

he was best able to form a judgment, to express herself in that species of literature which would afford the fullest scope to the creative and dramatic faculties which she so eminently possessed. Here, however, his influence ended. He helped to reveal George Eliot to herself, and after that there was little left for him to do. But this gift of stimulating another by sympathetic insight and critical appreciation is itself of priceless value. When Schiller died, Goethe said, "The half of my existence is gone from me." A terrible word to utter for one so great. But never again, he knew, would he meet with the same complete comprehension, and, lacking that, his genius itself seemed less his own than before.

There is an impression abroad that Mr. Lewes, if anything, did some injury to George Eliot from a literary point of view; that the nature of his pursuits led her to adopt too technical and pedantic a phraseology in her novels. But this idea is unjust to both. In comparing her earliest with her latest style, it is clear that from the first she was apt to cull her illustrations from the physical sciences, thereby showing how much these studies had become part of herself. Indeed, she was far more liable to introduce these scientific modes of expression than Mr. Lewes, as may be easily seen by comparing his 'Life of Goethe,' partly re-written in 1854, with some of her essays of the same date. As to her matter, it is curious how much of it was drawn from the earliest sources of memory — from that life of her childhood to which she may sometimes have turned yearningly as to a long-lost Paradise. Most of her works might, indeed, not inaptly be called 'Looking Backward.' They are a half-pathetic, half-humorous, but entirely tender revivification of the "days that are no more." No one, however intimate, could really intermeddle with the workings of a genius drawing its happiest inspiration from the earliest experiences of its own individual past.

Nothing is more characteristic of this obvious tendency than the first of the 'Scenes of Clerical Life,' 'The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton.' At Chilvers Coton the curious in such matters may still see the identical church where the incumbent of Shepperton used to preach sermons shrewdly compounded of High Church doctrines and Low

Church evangelicalism, not forgetting to note "its little flight of steps with their wooden rail running up the outer wall, and leading to the school-children's gallery." There they may still see the little churchyard, though they may look in vain for the "slim black figure" of the Rev. Amos, "as it flits past the pale gravestones," in "the silver light that falls aslant on church and tomb." And among the tombs there is one, a handsome substantial monument, overshadowed by a yew-tree, on which there is this inscription: —

HERE LIES,
WAITING THE SUMMONS OF THE ARCHANGEL'S TRUMPET,
ALL THAT WAS MORTAL OF
THE BELOVED WIFE OF THE
REV. JOHN GWYTHER, B.A.,
CURATE OF THIS PARISH,
NOV. 4TH, 1836,
AGED THIRTY-FOUR YEARS,
LEAVING A HUSBAND AND SEVEN CHILDREN.

This Emma Gwyther is none other than the beautiful Milly, the wife of Amos, so touchingly described by George Eliot, whose mother, Mrs. Evans, was her intimate friend. George Eliot would be in her teens when she heard the story of this sweet woman: heard the circumstantial details of her struggles to make the two ends of a ridiculously small income meet the yearly expenses: heard her mother, no doubt (in the words of Mrs. Hackit) blame her weak forbearance in tolerating the presence in her house of the luxurious and exacting countess, who, having ingratiated herself with the gullible Amos by her talk of the "livings" she would get him, gave much scandal in the neighborhood: heard of the pathetic death-bed, when, worn by care and toil, the gentle life ebbed quietly away, leaving a life-long void in her husband's heart and home. All this was the talk of the neighborhood when George Eliot was a girl; and her extraordinary memory allowed nothing to escape.

On the completion of 'Amos Barton,' Mr. Lewes, who, as

already mentioned, was a contributor to 'Maga,' sent the MS. to the editor, the late Mr. John Blackwood, as the work of an anonymous friend. This was in the autumn of 1856. The other scenes of 'Clerical Life' were then unwritten, but the editor was informed that the story submitted to his approval formed one of a series. Though his judgment was favorable, he begged to see some of the other tales before accepting this, freely making some criticisms on the plot and studies of character in 'Amos Barton.' This, however, disheartened the author, whose peculiar diffidence had only been overcome by Mr. Lewes's hearty commendation. When the editor had been made aware of the injurious effect of his objections, he hastened to efface it by accepting the tale without further delay. It appeared soon afterwards in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January 1857, where it occupied the first place. This story, by some considered as fine as anything the novelist ever wrote, came to an end in the next number. 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story' and 'Janet's Repentance' were written in quick succession, and the series was completed in November of the same year.

Although there was nothing sufficiently sensational in these 'Scenes' to arrest the attention of that great public which must be roused by something new and startling, literary judges were not slow to discern the powerful realism with which the author had drawn these uncompromising studies from life. After the appearance of 'Amos Barton,' Mr. Blackwood wrote to the anonymous author: "It is a long time since I have read anything so fresh, so humorous, and so touching. The style is capital, conveying so much in so few words." Soon afterwards he began another letter: "My dear Amos, I forget whether I told you or Lewes that I had shown part of the MS. to Thackeray. He was staying with me, and having been out at dinner, came in about eleven o'clock, when I had just finished reading it. I said to him, 'Do you know that I think I have lighted upon a new author, who is uncommonly like a first-class passenger.' I showed him a page or two, I think the passage where the curate returns home and Milly is first introduced. He would not pronounce whether it came up to my ideas, but remarked

afterwards that he would have liked to have read more, which I thought a good sign."

Dickens, after the publication of the 'Scenes,' sent a letter to the unknown writer through the editor, warmly expressing the admiration he felt for them. But he was strongly of opinion from the first that they must have been written by a woman. In the meanwhile the tales were reprinted in a collected form, and they were so successful that the editor, writing to Mr. Lewes at the end of January 1858, when the book had hardly been out a month, was able to say, "George Eliot has fairly achieved a literary reputation among judges, and the public must follow, although it may take time." And in a letter to George Eliot herself, he wrote in February: "You will recollect, when we proposed to reprint, my impression was that the series had not lasted long enough in the magazine to give you a hold on the general public, although long enough to make your literary reputation. Unless in exceptional cases, a very long time often elapses between the two stages of reputation — the literary and the public. Your progress will be *sure*, if not so quick as we could wish."

While the sketches were being re-issued in book-form, Messrs. Blackwood informed its author that they saw good cause for making a large increase in the forthcoming reprint, and their anticipations were fully justified by its success. All sorts of rumors were abroad as to the real author of these clerical tales. Misled by a hint, calculated to throw him off the real scent, Mr. Blackwood was at first under the impression that they were the work of a clergyman, and this may perhaps have been the origin of a belief which lingered till quite recently, that George Eliot was the daughter of a clergyman, a statement made by several of the leading daily papers after her death. Abandoning the idea of the clergyman, Mr. Blackwood next fixed upon a very different sort of person, to wit, Professor Owen, whom he suspected owing to the similarity of hand-writing and the scientific knowledge so exceptional in a novelist. No less funny was the supposition held by others of Lord Lytton — who more than once hoaxed the public under a new literary disguise — having at last surpassed himself in the sterling excellence of these tales. Now

that Bulwer has gone the way of all fashions, it seems incredible that the most obtuse and slow-witted of critics should have mistaken for a moment his high-flown sentimental style for the new author's terse, vigorous, and simple prose.

It was impossible, however, for an author to remain a mere nameless abstraction. An appellation of some kind became an imperative necessity, and, during the passage of 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story' through the press, the pseudonym of "George Eliot" — a name destined to become so justly renowned — was finally assumed.

The 'Scenes of Clerical Life' were to George Eliot's future works what a bold, spirited sketch is to a carefully elaborated picture. All the qualities that distinguished her genius may be discovered in this, her first essay in fiction. With all Miss Austen's matchless faculty for painting common-place characters, George Eliot has that other nobler faculty of showing what tragedy, pathos, and humor may be lying in the experience of a human soul "that looks out through dull gray eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones." While depicting some common-place detail of every-day life, she has the power to make her reader realize its close relation to the universal life. She never gives you the mere dry bones and fragments of existence as represented in some particular section of society, but always manages to keep before the mind the invisible links connecting it with the world at large. In 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story' there is a passage as beautiful as any in her works, and fully illustrating this attitude of her mind. It is where Tina, finding herself deceived in Captain Wybrow, gives way to her passionate grief in solitude.

"While this poor little heart was being bruised with a weight too heavy for it, Nature was holding on her calm inexorable way, in unmoved and terrible beauty. The stars were rushing in their eternal courses; the tides swelled to the level of the last expectant weed; the sun was making brilliant day to busy nations on the other side of the swift earth. The stream of human thought and deed was hurrying and broadening onward. The astronomer was at his telescope; the great ships were laboring over the waves; the toiling eagerness of commerce, the fierce spirit of revolution, were only ebbing in

brief rest; and sleepless statesmen were dreading the possible crisis of the morrow. What were our little Tina and her trouble in this mighty torrent, rushing from one awful unknown to another? Lighter than the smallest centre of quivering life in the water-drop, hidden and uncared for as the pulse of anguish in the breast of the tiniest bird that has fluttered down to its nest with the long-sought food, and has found the nest torn and empty."

There is rather more incident in this story of Mr. Gilfil than in either of the two other 'Scenes of Clerical Life.' In 'Amos Barton' the narrative is of the simplest, as has already been indicated; and the elements from which 'Janet's Repentance' is composed are as free from any complex entanglement of plot. The author usually describes the most ordinary circumstances of English life, but the powerful rendering of the human emotions which spring from them takes a most vivid hold of the imagination: 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story,' however, seems a little Italian romance dropped on English soil.

It is, in brief, the narration of how Sir Christopher Cheverel and his wife, during their residence at Milan, took pity on a little orphan girl, "whose large dark eyes shone from out her queer little face like the precious stones in a grotesque image carved in old ivory." Caterina, or Tina as she is called, taken back to Cheverel Manor, grew up under the care of the Baronet's wife, to whom she became endeared by her exceptional musical talent. Sir Christopher had no children, but had chosen his nephew, Captain Wybrow, for his heir, and planned a marriage between him and Miss Assher, the handsome and accomplished owner of a pretty estate. Another marriage, on which he has equally set his heart, is that between his ward Maynard Gilfil, an open-eyed manly young fellow destined for the Church, and the mellow-voiced, large-eyed Tina, for whom he has long nursed an undeclared passion. But alas, for the futility of human plans! Tina, to whom the elegant Anthony Wybrow has been secretly professing love, suffers tortures of jealousy when he and Miss Assher, to whom he has dutifully become engaged, come on a visit to Cheverel Manor. The treacherous Captain, to lull the suspicions of his betrothed, insinuates that poor Miss Sarti entertains a hope-

less passion for him, which puts the poor girl, who gets an inkling of this double-dealing, into a frenzy of indignation. In this state she possesses herself of a dagger, and as she is going to meet the Captain by appointment, dreams of plunging the weapon in the traitor's heart. But on reaching the appointed spot, she beholds the false lover stretched motionless on the ground already — having suddenly died of heart disease. Tina's anguish is indescribable: she gives the alarm to the household, but stung by remorse for a contemplated revenge of which her tender-hearted nature was utterly incapable, she flies unperceived from the premises at night. Being searched for in vain, she is suspected of having committed suicide. After some days of almost unbearable suspense, news is brought that Tina is lying ill at the cottage of a former maid in the household. With reviving hopes her anxious lover rides to the farm, sees the half-stunned, unhappy girl, and, after a while, manages to remove her to his sister's house. She gradually recovers under Mrs. Heron's gentle tendance, and one day a child's accidental striking of a deep bass note on the harpsichord suddenly revives her old passionate delight in music. And 'the soul that was born anew to music was born anew to love.' After a while Tina agrees to become Mr. Gilfil's wife, who has been given the living at Shepperton, where a happy future seems in store for the Vicar. "But the delicate plant had been too deeply bruised, and in the struggle to put forth a blossom it died.

"Tina died, and Maynard Gilfil's love went with her into deep silence forevermore."

Besides this sympathy with the homeliest characters and situations, or, more properly speaking, springing from it, there already runs through these three tales the delicious vein of humor irradiating George Eliot's otherwise sombre pictures of life with sudden flashes of mirth as of sunlight trembling above dark waters. In this depth and richness of humor George Eliot not only takes precedence of all other distinguished women, but she stands among them without a rival. Hers is that thoughtful outlook on life, that infinite depth of observation which, taking note of the inconsistencies and the blunders, the self-delusions and "fantastic pranks" of her

fellow-men, finds the source of laughter very near to tears; never going out of her way for the eccentric and peculiar in human nature, seeing that human nature itself appears to her as the epitome of all incongruity. It is this breath of conception and unerringness of vision piercing through the external and accidental to the core of man's mixed nature which give certain of her creations something of the life-like complexity of Shakespeare's.

Her power of rendering the idiom and manners of peasants, artisans, and paupers, of calling up before us the very gestures and phrases of parsons, country practitioners, and other varieties of inhabitants of our provincial towns and rural districts, already manifests itself fully in these clerical stories. Here we find such types as Mr. Dempster, the unscrupulous, brutal, drunken lawyer; Mr. Pilgrim, the tall, heavy, rough-mannered, and spluttering doctor, profusely addicted to bleeding and blistering his patients; Mr. Gilfil, the eccentric vicar, with a tender love-story hidden beneath his rugged exterior; the large-hearted, unfortunate Janet, rescued from moral ruin by Mr. Tryan, the ascetic evangelical clergyman, whose character, the author remarks, might have been found sadly wanting in perfection by feeble and fastidious minds, but, as she adds, "The blessed work of helping the world forward happily does not wait to be done by perfect men; and I should imagine that neither Luther nor John Bunyan, for example, would have satisfied the modern demand for an ideal hero, who believes nothing but what is true, feels nothing but what is exalted, and does nothing but what is graceful. The real heroes of God's making are quite different: they have their natural heritage of love and conscience, which they drew in with their mother's milk; they know one or two of those deep spiritual truths which are only to be won by long wrestling with their own sins and their own sorrows; they have earned faith and strength so far as they have done genuine work, but the rest is dry, barren theory, blank prejudice, vague hearsay."

George Eliot's early acquaintance with many types of the clerical character, and her sympathy with the religious life in all its manifestations, was never more fully shown than in

these 'Scenes.' In 'Janet's Repentance' we already discover one of George Eliot's favorite psychological studies — the awakening of a morally mixed nature to a new, a spiritual life. This work of regeneration Mr. Tryan performs for Janet, Felix Holt for Esther, and Daniel Deronda for Gwendolen. Her protest against the application of too lofty a moral standard in judging of our fellow-creatures, her championship of the "mongrel, ungainly dogs who are nobody's pets," is another of the prominent qualities of her genius fully expressed in this firstling work, being, indeed, at the root of her humorous conception of life. One of the finest bits of humor in the present volume is the scene in 'Amos Barton,' which occurs at the workhouse, euphemistically called the "College." Mr. Barton, having just finished his address to the paupers, is thus accosted by Mr. Spratt, "a small-featured, small-statured man, with a remarkable power of language, mitigated by hesitation, who piqued himself on expressing unexceptionable sentiments in unexceptionable language on all occasions.

"'Mr. Barton, sir — aw — aw — excuse my trespassing on your time — aw — to beg that you will administer a rebuke to this boy; he is — aw — aw — most inveterate in ill-behavior during service-time.'

"The inveterate culprit was a boy of seven, vainly contending against 'candles' at his nose by feeble sniffing. But no sooner had Mr. Spratt uttered his impeachment than Mrs. Fodge rushed forward, and placed herself between Mr. Barton and the accused.

"'That's *my* child, Muster Barton,' she exclaimed, further manifesting her maternal instincts by applying her apron to her offspring's nose. 'He 's aly's a-findin' faut wi' him, and a-poundin' him for nothin.' Let him goo an' eat his roost goose as is a-smellin' up in our noses while we 're a-swallering them greasy broth, an' let my boy alooan.'

"Mr. Spratt's small eyes flashed, and he was in danger of uttering sentiments not unexceptionable before the clergyman; but Mr. Barton, foreseeing that a prolongation of this episode would not be to edification, said 'Silence!' in his severest tones.

"'Let me hear no abuse. Your boy is not likely to behave

well, if you set him the example of being saucy.' Then stooping down to Master Fodge, and taking him by the shoulder, 'Do you like being beaten?'

"'No — a.'

"'Then what a silly boy you are to be naughty. If you were not naughty, you would n't be beaten. But if you are naughty, God will be angry, as well as Mr. Spratt; and God can burn you forever. That will be worse than being beaten.'

"Master Fodge's countenance was neither affirmative nor negative of this proposition.

"'But,' continued Mr. Barton, 'if you will be a good boy, God will love you, and you will grow up to be a good man. Now, let me hear next Thursday that you have been a good boy.'

"Master Fodge had no distinct vision of the benefit that would accrue to him from this change of courses."

CHAPTER VIII.

ADAM BEDE.

Rarely has a novelist come to his task with such a far-reaching culture, such an intellectual grasp, as George Eliot. We have seen her girlhood occupied with an extraordinary variety of studies; we have seen her plunged in abstruse metaphysical speculations; we have seen her translating some of the most laborious philosophical investigations of German thinkers; we have seen her again translating from the Latin the 'Ethics' of Spinoza; and, finally, we have seen her attracting, and attracted by, some of the leaders in science, philosophy, and literature.

Compared with such qualifications who among novelists could compete? What could a Dickens, or a Thackeray himself, throw into the opposing scale? Lewes, indeed, was a match for her in variety of attainments, but he had made several attempts at fiction, and the attempts had proved failures. When at last, in the maturity of her powers, George Eliot pro-

duced 'Adam Bede,' she produced a novel in which the amplest results of knowledge and meditation were so happily blended with instinctive insight into life and character, and the rarest dramatic imagination, as to stamp it immediately as one of the great triumphs and masterpieces in the world of fiction.

It is worth noticing that in 'Adam Bede' George Eliot fulfils to the utmost the demands which she had been theoretically advocating in her essays. In some of these she had not only eloquently enforced the importance of a truthful adherence to nature, but had pointed out how the artist is thus in the very vanguard of social and political reforms; as in familiarizing the imagination with the real condition of the people, he did much towards creating that sympathy with their wants, their trials, and their sufferings, which would eventually effect external changes in harmony with this better understanding. Such had been her teaching. And in Dickens she had recognized the one great novelist who, in certain respects, had painted the lower orders with unerring truthfulness. His "Oliver Twists," his "Nancys," his "Joes," were terrible and pathetic pictures of the forlorn outcasts haunting our London streets. And if, as George Eliot says, Dickens had been able to "give us their psychological character, their conception of life and their emotions, with the same truth as their idiom and manners, his books would be the greatest contribution Art has ever made to the awakening of social sympathies." Now George Eliot absolutely does what Dickens aimed at doing. She not merely seizes the outward and accidental traits of her characters: she pierces with unerring vision to the very core of their nature, and enables us to realize the peculiarly subtle relations between character and circumstance. Her primary object is to excite our sympathy with the most ordinary aspects of human life, with the people that one may meet any day in the fields, the workshops, and the homes of England. Her most vivid creations are not exceptional beings, not men or women pre-eminently conspicuous for sublime heroism of character or magnificent mental endowments, but work-a-day folk,

> "Not too fine or good
> For human nature's daily food."

To this conscientious fidelity of observation and anxious endeavor to report the truth and nothing but the truth, as of a witness in a court of justice, are owing that life-like vividness with which the scenery and people in 'Adam Bede' seem projected on the reader's imagination. The story, indeed, is so intensely realistic as to have given rise to the idea that it is entirely founded on fact. That there is such a substratum is hardly a matter of doubt, and there have been various publications all tending to prove that the chief characters in 'Adam Bede' were not only very faithful copies of living people, but of people closely connected with its author. To some extent this is incontrovertible. But, on the other hand, there is a likelihood of the fictitious events having in their turn been grafted on to actual personages and occurrences, till the whole has become so fused together as to lead some persons to the firm conviction that Dinah Morris is absolutely identical with Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, the Derbyshire Methodist. Such a supposition would help to reconcile the conflicting statements respectively made by the great novelist and the writers of two curious little books entitled 'Seth Bede, the Methody, his Life and Labors,' chiefly written by himself, and 'George Eliot in Derbyshire,' by Guy Roslyn.

From these brochures one gathers that Hayslope, where the rustic drama of 'Adam Bede' unfolds itself, is the village of Ellaston, not far from Ashbourne in Staffordshire. This village is so little altered that the traveller may still see the sign-board of the "Donnithorne Arms," and the red brick hall, only with windows no longer unpatched. Samuel, William, and Robert Evans (the father of the novelist) were born in this place, and began life as carpenters, as their father before them. Samuel Evans became a zealous Methodist, and was rather laughed at by his family in consequence, for he says, "My elder brothers often tried to tease me; they entertained High Church principles. They told me what great blunders I made in preaching and prayer; that I had more zeal than knowledge." In this, as in other respects, he is the prototype of Seth, as Adam resembles Robert Evans, one of the more secular elder brothers, only

that in real life it was Samuel who married Elizabeth, the Dinah Morris of fiction.

Much has been written about this Elizabeth Evans (the aunt of George Eliot, already spoken of): indeed, her life was one of such rare devotion to an ideal cause, that even such imperfect fragments of it as have been committed to writing by herself or her friends are of considerable interest. Elizabeth was born at Newbold in Leicestershire, and left her father's house when little more than fourteen years old. She joined the Methodists in 1797, after which she had entirely done with the pleasures of the world and all her old companions. "I saw it my duty," she says, "to leave off all my superfluities of dress; hence I pulled off all my bunches, cut off my curls, left off my lace, and in this I found an unspeakable pleasure. I saw I could make a better use of my time and money than to follow the fashions of a vain world." While still a beautiful young girl, attired in a Quaker dress and bonnet, she used to walk across those bleak Derbyshire hills, looking so strangely mournful in their treeless nudity, with their bare stone fences gray against a grayer sky. Here she trudged from village to village, gathering the poor about her, and pouring forth words of such earnest conviction that, as she says, "Many were brought to the Lord." The points of resemblance between her career and that of Dinah Morris cannot fail to strike the reader, even their phraseology being often singularly alike, as when Mrs. Evans writes in the short account of what she calls her "unprofitable life": "I saw it my duty to be wholly devoted to God, and to be set apart for the Master's use;" while Dinah says: "My life is too short, and God's work is too great for me to think of making a home for myself in this world." It must be borne in mind, however, that these similarities of expression are natural enough when one considers that Dinah is a type of the same old-fashioned kind of Methodism to which Mrs. Evans belonged. What is perhaps stranger is, that the account given by George Eliot of her various meetings with her aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, should differ considerably from what the latter herself remembered or has stated about them. Shortly after the appearance of 'Adam Bede,' atten-

tion had been publicly called to the identity of the heroine of fiction with the Methodist preacher. This conviction was so strong in Wirksworth, that a number of friends placed a memorial tablet in the Methodist chapel at Wirksworth with the following inscription:

ERECTED BY GRATEFUL FRIENDS,
In Memory of
MRS. ELIZABETH EVANS,
(KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS "DINAH BEDE")
WHO DURING MANY YEARS PROCLAIMED ALIKE IN THE
OPEN AIR, THE SANCTUARY, AND FROM HOUSE
TO HOUSE,
THE LOVE OF CHRIST:
SHE DIED IN THE LORD, MAY 9TH, 1849; AGED 74 YEARS

In order to give a correct notion of the amount of truth in her novel, George Eliot wrote in the following terms to her friend Miss Hennell on the 7th of October, 1859: "I should like, while the subject is vividly present with me, to tell you more exactly than I have ever yet done, *what* I knew of my aunt, Elizabeth Evans. My father, you know, lived in Warwickshire all my life with him, having finally left Staffordshire first, and then Derbyshire, six or seven years before he married my mother. There was hardly any intercourse between my father's family, resident in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, and our family — few and far between visits of (to my childish feeling) strange uncles and aunts and cousins from my father's far-off native county, and once a journey of my own, as a little child, with my father and mother, to see my uncle William (a rich builder) in Staffordshire — but *not* my uncle and aunt Samuel, so far as I can recall the dim outline of things — are what I remember of northerly relatives in my childhood.

"But when I was seventeen or more — after my sister was married, and I was mistress of the house — my father took a journey into Derbyshire, in which, visiting my uncle and aunt Samuel, who were very poor, and lived in a humble cottage at Wirksworth, he found my aunt in a very delicate state of

health after a serious illness, and, to do her bodily good, he persuaded her to return with him, telling her that *I* should be very, very happy to have her with me for a few weeks. I was then strongly under the influence of evangelical belief, and earnestly endeavoring to shape this anomalous English-Christian life of ours into some consistency with the spirit and simple verbal tenor of the New Testament. I *was* delighted to see my aunt. Although I had only heard her spoken of as a strange person, given to a fanatical vehemence of exhortation in private as well as public, I believed that I should find sympathy between us. She was then an old woman — above sixty — and, I believe, had for a good many years given up preaching. A tiny little woman, with bright, small dark eyes, and hair that had been black, I imagine, but was now gray — a pretty woman in her youth, but of a totally different physical type from Dinah. The difference — as you will believe — was not *simply* physical; no difference is. She was a woman of strong natural excitability, which I know, from the description I have heard my father and half-sister give, prevented her from the exercise of discretion under the promptings of her zeal. But this vehemence was now subdued by age and sickness; she was very gentle and quiet in her manners, very loving, and (what she must have been from the very first) a truly religious soul, in whom the love of God and love of man were fused together. There was nothing rightly distinctive in her religious conversation. I had had much intercourse with pious dissenters before; the only freshness I found in her talk came from the fact that she had been the greater part of her life a Wesleyan, and though *she left the society when women were no longer allowed to preach*, and joined the New Wesleyans, she retained the character of thought that belongs to the genuine old Wesleyan. I had never talked with a Wesleyan before, and we used to have little debates about predestination, for I was then a strong Calvinist. Here her superiority came out, and I remember now, with loving admiration, one thing which at the time I disapproved; it was not strictly a consequence of her Arminian belief, and at first sight might seem opposed to it, yet it came from the spirit of love which clings to the

bad logic of Arminianism. When my uncle came to fetch her, after she had been with us a fortnight or three weeks, he was speaking of a deceased minister once greatly respected, who, from the action of trouble upon him, had taken to small tippling, though otherwise not culpable. 'But I hope the good man's in heaven for all that,' said my uncle. 'Oh yes,' said my aunt, with a deep inward groan of joyful conviction, 'Mr. A.'s in heaven, that's sure.' This was at the time an offence to my stern, ascetic, hard views — how beautiful it is to me now!

"As to my aunt's conversation, it is a fact that the only two things of any interest I remember in our lonely sittings and walks are her telling me one sunny afternoon how she had, with another pious woman, visited an unhappy girl in prison, stayed with her all night, and gone with her to execution; and one or two accounts of supposed miracles in which she believed, among the rest, *the face with the crown of thorns seen in the glass.* In her account of the prison scenes I remember no word she uttered; I only remember her tone and manner, and the deep feeling I had under the recital. Of the girl she knew nothing, I believe, or told me nothing, but that she was a common, coarse girl, convicted of child-murder. The incident lay in my mind for years on years, as a dead germ, apparently, till time had made my mind a nidus in which it could fructify; it then turned out to be the germ of 'Adam Bede.'

"I saw my aunt twice after this. Once I spent a day and night with my father in the Wirksworth cottage, sleeping with my aunt, I remember. Our interview was less interesting than in the former time; I think I was less simply devoted to religious ideas. And once again she came with my uncle to see me, when father and I were living at Foleshill; *then* there was some pain, for I had given up the form of Christian belief, and was in a crude state of free-thinking. She stayed about three or four days, I think. This is all I remember distinctly, as matter I could write down, of my dear aunt, whom I really loved. You see how she suggested 'Dinah;' but it is not possible you should see, as I do, how entirely her individuality differed from 'Dinah's.' How curi-

ous it seems to me that people should think 'Dinah's' sermon, prayers, and speeches were *copied*, when they were written with hot tears as they surged up in my own mind!

"As to my indebtedness to facts of local and personal history of a small kind connected with Staffordshire and Derbyshire, you may imagine of what kind that is, when I tell you that I never remained in either of those counties more than a few days together, and of only two such visits have I more than a shadowy, interrupted recollection. The details which I know as facts, and have made use of for my picture, were gathered from such imperfect allusion and narrative as I heard from my father in his occasional talk about old times.

"As to my aunt's children or grandchildren saying, if they *did* say, that 'Dinah' is a good portrait of my aunt, that is simply the vague, easily satisfied notion imperfectly instructed people always have of portraits. It is not surprising that simple men and women, without pretension to enlightened discrimination, should think a generic resemblance constitutes a portrait, when we see the great public, so accustomed to be delighted with *mis*-representations of life and character, which they accept as representations, that they are scandalized when art makes a nearer approach to truth.

"Perhaps I am doing a superfluous thing in writing all this to you, but I am prompted to do it by the feeling that in future years 'Adam Bede,' and all that concerns it, may have become a dim portion of the past, and that I may not be able to recall so much of the truth as I have now told you."

Nothing could prove more conclusively how powerful was the impression which 'Adam Bede' created than this controversy concerning the amount of truth which its characters contained. But, as hinted before, it seems very likely that some of the doings and sayings of the fictitious personages should have been attributed, almost unconsciously, to the real people whom they resembled. How quick is the popular imagination in effecting these transformations came only quite recently under my notice, when some English travellers, while visiting Château d'If, were taken by the guide in perfect good faith to see the actual dungeon where Monte Cristo was im-

prisoned! Similarly, one would think that the moving sermon preached by Dinah on the Green at Hayslope had been afterwards erroneously ascribed to Mrs. Elizabeth Evans. But an account recently published in the *Century Magazine* by one who had long known the Evanses of Wirksworth, seems irreconcilable with such a supposition. According to this writer it would appear that besides the visits to her aunt at Wirksworth, of which George Eliot speaks in the letter just quoted, there was one other of which no mention is made. This visit, which she paid her cousin, Mr. Samuel Evans, occurred in 1842, when she remained a week at his house in Wirksworth. The aunt and niece were in the habit of seeing each other every day for several hours at this time. They usually met at the house of one of the married daughters of Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, holding long conversations while sitting by themselves in the parlor. "These secret conversations," says the writer of the article, "excited some curiosity in the family, and one day one of the daughters said, 'Mother, I can't think what thee and Mary Ann have got to talk about so much.' To which Mrs. Evans replied: 'Well, my dear, I don't know what she wants, but she gets me to tell her all about my life and my religious experience, and she puts it all down in a little book. I can't make out what she wants it for.'" After her departure, Mrs. Evans is reported to have said to her daughter, "Oh dear, Mary Ann has got one thing I did not mean her to take away, and that is the notes of the first sermon I preached at Ellaston Green." According to the same authority, Marian Evans took notes of everything people said in her hearing: no matter who was speaking, down it went into the note-book, which seemed never out of her hand; and these notes she is said to have transcribed every night before going to bed. Yet this habit was foreign to her whole character, and the friends who knew her most intimately in youth and later life never remember seeing her resort to such a practice. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the novelist very freely used many of the circumstances connected with her aunt's remarkable career. How closely she adhered to nature is shown by the fact that in Mrs. Poyser and Bartle Massey she retained the actual names of the characters por-

trayed, as they happened to be both dead. Bartle Massey, the village cynic, had been the schoolmaster of her father, Robert Evans. How accurately the latter, together with all his surroundings, was described is shown by the following anecdote. On its first appearance 'Adam Bede' was read aloud to an old man, an intimate associate of Robert Evans in his Staffordshire days. This man knew nothing concerning either author or subject beforehand, and his astonishment was boundless on recognizing so many friends and incidents of his own youth portrayed with unerring fidelity. He sat up half the night listening to the story in breathless excitement, now and then slapping his knee as he exclaimed, "That 's Robert, that 's Robert to the life."

Although Wirksworth is not the locality described in 'Adam Bede,' it contains features recalling that quaint little market-town, where over the door of one of the old-fashioned houses may be read the name made illustrious by the inimitable Mrs. Poyser. In the neighborhood, too, are "Arkwright's mills there at Cromford," casually alluded to by Adam Bede ; and should the tourist happen to enter one of the cottages of gray stone, with blue-washed door and window-frames, he may still alight on specimens of Methodism, as devout as Seth Bede, eloquently expounding the latest political event by some prophecy of Daniel or Ezekiel. In short, one breathes the atmosphere in which such characters as Dinah and Seth actually lived and had their being. This uncompromising Realism, so far from detracting, only enhances the genius of this powerful novel. A thousand writers might have got hold of these identical materials: a George Eliot alone could have cast these materials into the mould of 'Adam Bede.' Let any one glance at the account of their religious experiences, as given by Elizabeth or Samuel Evans, and he will realize all the more strongly how great was the genius of her who transfused these rambling, common-place effusions into such an artistic whole. I have entered so minutely into this question of the likeness between the actual characters and those in the novel purely on account of the biographical interest attaching to it. In judging of 'Adam Bede' as a work of art these facts possess next to no importance. If we could

trace the characters in any one of Shakespeare's plays to human beings actually connected with the poet, we should consider such a discovery immensely valuable as throwing new light on his own life, though it would hardly affect our critical estimate of the drama itself.

So much has been said already about the characters in 'Adam Bede' in connection with the real people they resemble, that little need be added here about them. Dinah Morris — the youthful preacher, whose eloquence is but the natural, almost involuntary manifestation in words, of a beautiful soul; whose spring of love is so abundant that it overflows the narrow limits of private affection, and blesses multitudes of toiling, suffering men and women with its wealth of pity, hope, and sympathy — was a new creation in the world of fiction. Some writer has pointed out a certain analogy between the sweet Derbyshire Methodist and the gentle pietist whose confessions form a very curious chapter of 'Wilhelm Meister.' But the two characters are too dissimilar for comparison. The German heroine is a dreamy, passive, introspective nature, feeling much but doing little; whereas the English preacher does not inquire too curiously into the mysteries of her faith, but moved by the spirit of its teaching goes about actively, participating in the lives of others by her rousing words and her acts of charity. Only a woman would or could have described just such a woman as this: a woman whose heart is centred in an impersonal ideal instead of in any individual object of love; whereas a man's heroine always has her existence rooted in some personal affection or passion, whether for parent or lover, child or husband. This makes Dinah less romantically interesting than Hetty Sorrel, the beautiful, kittenlike, self-involved creature with whom she is so happily contrasted. George Eliot never drew a more living figure than this of Hetty, hiding such a hard little heart under that soft dimpling beauty of hers. Again, I think that only a woman would have depicted just such a Hetty as this. The personal charms of this young girl are drawn in words that have the glow of life itself; yet while intensely conscious of her beauty, we are kept aware all the time that, to use one of the famous Mrs. Poyser's epigrammatic sayings, Hetty is "no better nor

a cherry wi a hard stone inside it." George Eliot is never dazzled or led away by her own bewitching creation as a man would have been. There is a certain pitilessness in her analysis of Hetty's shallow, frivolous little soul, almost as if she were saying — See here, what stuff this beauty which you adore is made of in reality! To quote her own subtle, far-reaching interpretation of beauty: "Hetty's face had a language that transcended her feelings. There are faces which nature charges with a meaning and pathos not belonging to the simple human soul that flutters beneath them, but speaking the joys and sorrows of foregone generations; eyes that tell of deep love which doubtless has been and is somewhere, but not paired with these eyes, perhaps paired with pale eyes that can say nothing, just as a national language may be instinct with poetry unfelt by the lips that use it."

The sensation created by 'Adam Bede' was shown in other ways besides the claim of some to have discovered the original characters of this striking novel. The curiosity of the public was naturally much exercised as to who the unknown author could possibly be, who had so suddenly leaped into fame. And now there comes on the scene an individual who does not claim to be the living model of one of the characters portrayed, but to be the author of the book himself. And the name of this person was Liggins!

While the 'Scenes of Clerical Life' were yet appearing in *Blackwood's Magazine* the inhabitants of Nuneaton and its neighborhood were considerably perplexed and excited to find well-known places and persons touched off to the life. In Amos Barton they recognized the incumbent of Coton Church, in Mr. Pilgrim a medical man familiar to every child in the town, and indeed in every one of the characters an equally unmistakable portrait. Clearly no one but a fellow-townsman could have hit off these wonderful likenesses. Literary talent not being too abundant, their choice of an author was limited. The only man who by any stretch of imagination seemed to have the making of a man of letters in him was this above-mentioned Liggins. To have studied at Cambridge, gallantly run through a fortune, and be in very needy circumstances, were exactly the qualifications to be expected in a man of

genius. Further evidence seeming unnecessary, the real authorship of the 'Scenes' was now revealed in an Isle of Man paper. At first the reputed author gently denied the impeachment, but on the appearance of 'Adam Bede' he succumbed to the temptation. To be fêted at dinner parties as a successful author, and to have a subscription set on foot by enthusiastic lady-admirers and fellow-townsmen, in whose eyes he was a sadly unrequited genius, proved irresistible. A local clergyman even wrote to the *Times* stating Liggins to be the real surname of "George Eliot"! The latter wrote, of course, denying the statement, and challenging the pretender to produce some specimen of his writing in the style of 'Adam Bede.' But the confidence of the Nuneaton public in their hero Liggins was not to be so easily shaken. Two dissenting ministers from Coventry went over to Attleborough to call upon the "great author," and to find out if he really did write 'Adam Bede.' Liggins evaded their questions, indirectly admitting that he did; but when they asked him point blank, "Liggins, tell us, *did* you write 'Adam Bede'?" he said, "If I did n't, the devil did!" and that was all they could get out of him. Another clergyman was much less sceptical, assuring every one that he was positive as to Liggins being the author, as he had seen the MS. of 'Adam Bede' in his hands. To this day there lives in the Isle of Man a certain venerable old gentleman who has never lost his faith in Liggins, but, when George Eliot is mentioned, gravely shakes his head, implying that there is more in the name than meets the eye of the superficial observer. But a heavy retribution befell the poor pseudo-author at last, for when his false pretences to favor were fully manifest he fell into utter neglect and poverty, ending his days in the workhouse.

This foolish misrepresentation hastened the disclosure of George Eliot's real personality and name, which occurred on the publication of 'The Mill on the Floss.' Shortly before that, Mr. Blackwood, who had long entertained the wish to know the author of the 'Scenes of Clerical Life' and of 'Adam Bede,' was invited by Lewes to meet him at last. No one was present at the dinner-table besides Mr. Lewes, Marian, and Mr. Blackwood himself. The dinner was an extremely

pleasant one, but when it was over, the guest could not help expressing his regret that George Eliot himself should not have been present. "Here he is," said Lewes, introducing the quiet, low-spoken lady who had presided at table, not without enjoyment at the sensation he produced as the astonished publisher shook hands with his contributor.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MILL ON THE FLOSS.

While the public had been trying to discover who the mysterious George Eliot could possibly be, one person there was who immediately penetrated the disguise, and felt positive as to the identity of the author. On reading the 'Scenes' and especially 'Adam Bede,' he was convinced that no one but a member of his own family could have written these stories. He recognized incidents, touches, a saying here or there, just the things that no one outside his own home could by any chance have come upon. But George Eliot's brother kept this discovery closely locked within his own breast. He trembled lest any one else should discover the secret, fearing the outcry of neighbors who might not always feel that the author had represented them in colors sufficiently flattering.

When 'The Mill on the Floss' appeared, however, the veil was lifted, and people heard that George Eliot had once been a Miss Marian Evans, who came from the neighborhood of Nuneaton in Warwickshire. To her brother Isaac alone this was no news, as he had detected his sister in the first of the 'Scenes.' The child-life of Tom and Maggie Tulliver was in many respects an autobiography; and no biographer can ever hope to describe the early history of George Eliot as she herself has done in 'The Mill on the Floss.' How many joys and griefs of those happy careless days must have been recalled to her brother — those days when little Mary Ann had sat poring over Daniel Defoe's 'History of the Devil' — or sought refuge in the attic at Griff House, after a quarrel with

him: "This attic was Maggie's favorite retreat on a wet day, when the weather was not too cold; here she fretted out all her ill-humors, and talked aloud to the worm-eaten floors and the worm-eaten shelves, and the dark rafters festooned with cobwebs; and here she kept a Fetish which she punished for all her misfortunes. This was the trunk of a large wooden doll, which once stared with the roundest of eyes above the reddest of cheeks, but was now entirely defaced by a long career of vicarious suffering. Three nails driven into the head commemorated as many crises in Maggie's nine years of earthly struggle, that luxury of vengeance having been suggested to her by the picture of Jael destroying Sisera in the old Bible."

Again, at some fields' distance from their old home there had been a "Round Pool" called "The Moat," "almost a perfect round, framed in with willows and tall reeds, so that the water was only to be seen when you got close to the brink. This was a favorite resort of Isaac and Mary Ann, as also of Tom and his sister when they went fishing together, and "Maggie thought it probable that the small fish would come to her hook and large ones to Tom's." The "Red Deeps," too, where Maggie loved to walk in June, when the "dog-roses were in their glory," and where she lived through many phases of her shifting inner life, was in the same vicinity, and at one time a beloved haunt of the future novelist.

But although some of the spots mentioned in 'The Mill on the Floss' have been easily identified as connected with George Eliot's early home, the scenery of that novel is mainly laid in Lincolnshire. St. Oggs, with "its red-fluted roofs and broad warehouse gables," is the ancient town of Gainsborough. The Floss is a tidal river like the Trent, and in each case the spring-tide, rushing up the river with its terrific wave and flooding the land for miles round, is known as the Eagre, a name not a little descriptive of the thing itself.

'The Mill on the Floss' (a title adopted by the author at the suggestion of Mr. Blackwood in preference to 'Sister Maggie') is the most poetical of George Eliot's novels. The great Floss, hurrying between green pastures to the sea, gives a unity of its own to this story, which opens to the roar of waters, the weltering waters which accompany

it at the close. It forms the elemental background which rounds the little lives of the ill-starred family group nurtured on its banks. The childhood of Tom and Maggie Tulliver is inextricably blended with this swift river, the traditions of which have been to them as fairy tales; its haunting presence is more or less with them throughout their chequered existence; and when pride and passion, when shame and sorrow, have divided the brother and sister, pursued as by some tragic fate, the Floss seems to rise in sympathy, and submerges them in its mighty waters to unite them once more "in an embrace never to be parted." It cannot fail to strike the reader that in almost every one of George Eliot's novels there occurs a death by drowning: as in the instance of Thias Bede, of Dunstan Cass, of Henleigh Grandcourt, and nearly in that of Tito. This may be accounted for by the fact that as a child the novelist became acquainted with the sudden death of a near relative who had accidentally fallen into a stream: an incident which sunk deeply into her retentive mind.

Fate plays a very conspicuous part in this as in most of George Eliot's novels. But it is not the Fate of the Greeks, it is not a power that affects human existence from without: it rather lies at the root of it, more or less shaping that existence according to obscure inherited tendencies, and in the collision between character and circumstance, between passion and law, potent only in proportion as the individual finally issues conquered or a conqueror from the struggle of life. This action of character on circumstance and of circumstance on character is an ever-recurring *motif* with George Eliot. We constantly see adverse circumstances modifying and moulding the lives of the actors in her stories. She has hardly, if ever, therefore drawn a hero or heroine, for these, instead of yielding, make circumstances yield to them. Dorothea and Lydgate, in abandoning their striving after the highest kind of life; Tito in invariably yielding to the most pleasurable prompting of the moment; Gwendolen in being mainly influenced by circumstances acting on her, without her reacting on them, are all types of this kind.

Maggie belongs, on the whole, to the same type. She, too, is what Goethe calls a problematic nature, a nature which,

along with vast possibilities and lofty aspirations, lacks a certain fixity of purpose, and drifting helplessly from one extreme to another, is shattered almost as soon as it has put out of port. In Maggie's case this evil springs from the very fulness of her nature; from the acuteness of an imagination which the many-sidedness of life attracts by turns in the most opposite directions. Tom, on the other hand, with his narrow practical understanding, entirely concentrated on the business in hand, swerves neither to right nor left, because he may be said to resemble a horse with blinkers, in that he sees only the road straight ahead. Maggie, with all her palpable weaknesses and startling inconsistencies, is the most adorable of George Eliot's women. In all poetry and fiction there is no child more delicious than the "little wench" with her loving heart and dreamy ways, her rash impulses and wild regrets, her fine susceptibilities and fiery jets of temper — in a word, her singularly fresh and vital nature. The same charm pervades every phase of her life. In her case the child, if I may so far modify Wordsworth's famous saying, is eminently the mother of the woman.

Profoundly affectionate by nature, and sympathizing as she does with her father in his calamity, she cannot help rebelling at the sordid narrowness of her daily life, passionately craving for a wider field wherein to develop her inborn faculties. In this state of yearning and wild unrest, her accidental reading of Thomas à Kempis forms a crisis in her life, by bringing about a spiritual awakening in which Christianity, for the first time, becomes a living truth to her. Intense as she is, Maggie now throws all the ardor of her nature into renunciation and self-conquest. She seeks her highest satisfaction in abnegation of all personal desire, and in entire devotion to others. In her young asceticism she relinquishes a world of which she is ignorant, stifling every impulse, however innocent, that seems opposed to her new faith.

But Maggie has more actual affinity with poets and artists than with saints and martyrs. Her soul thrills like a finely touched instrument to the beauty of the world around her, and though she doubts whether there may not even be a sinfulness in the indulgence of this enjoyment, yet the summer flowers

and the summer sunshine put her scruples to flight. And then, when, through the intervention of Philip Wakem, the enchantments of romance and poetry are brought within her reach, the glory of the world again lays hold of her imagination, and a fresh conflict is begun in her soul. Thus she drifts from one state into another most opposed to it, and to an outside observer, such as Tom, her abrupt transitions are a sign that she is utterly wanting in moral stamina.

Not only Tom, but many eminent critics, who have descanted with fond partiality on Maggie's early life, seem to be shocked by that part of her story in which she allows herself to fall passionately in love with such an ordinary specimen of manhood as Stephen Guest. The author has even been accused of violating the truth of Nature, inasmuch as such a high-minded woman as Maggie could never have inclined to so vulgar, so commonplace a man as her lover. Others, while not questioning the truth of the character, find fault with the poor heroine herself, whom they pronounce an ineffective nature revealing its innate unsoundness by the crowning error of an abject passion for so poor a creature as the dandy of St. Oggs. This contention only proves the singular vitality of the character itself, and nothing is more psychologically true in George Eliot's studies of character than this love of the high-souled heroine for a man who has no corresponding fineness of fibre in his nature, his attraction lying entirely in the magnetism of mutual passion. This vitality places Maggie Tulliver by the side of the Juliets, the Mignons, the Consuelos, the Becky Sharps, and other airy inheritors of immortality. It is curious that Mr. Swinburne, in view of such a character as this, or, indeed, bearing in mind a Silas Marner, a Dolly Winthrop, a Tito, and other intrinsically living reproductions of human nature, should describe George Eliot's as intellectually constructed characters in contrast to Charlotte Brontë's creations, the former, according to him, being the result of intellect, the latter of genius. If ever character came simply dropped out of the mould of Nature it is that of Maggie. His assumption, that 'The Mill on the Floss' can in any sense have been suggested by, or partially based upon, Mrs. Gaskell's story of 'The Moorland Cottage,'

seems equally baseless. There is certainly the identity of name in the heroines, and some resemblance of situation as regards portions of the story, but both the name and the situation are sufficiently common not to excite astonishment at such a coincidence. Had George Eliot really known of this tale — a tale feebly executed at the best — she would obviously have altered the name so as not to make her obligation too patent to the world. As it is, she was not a little astonished and even indignant, on accidentally seeing this opinion stated in some review, and positively denied ever having seen the story in question.

Indeed, when one knows how this story grew out of her own experience, how its earlier portions especially are a record of her own and her brother's childhood — how even Mrs. Glegg and Mrs. Pullet were only too faithfully done from the aunts of real life, one need not go far afield to seek for its origin. Every author usually writes one book, which he might more or less justly entitle 'My Confessions,' into which he pours an intimate part of his life under a thin disguise of fiction, a book invariably exciting a unique kind of interest in the reader be he conscious or not of the presence of this autobiographical element. Fielding's 'Amelia,' Thackeray's 'Pendennis,' Dickens's 'David Copperfield,' Charlotte Brontë's 'Villette,' are cases in point. 'The Mill on the Floss' is a work of similar nature. Maggie Tulliver is George Eliot herself, but only one side, one portion, one phase of George Eliot's many-sided, vastly complex nature. It is George Eliot's inner life in childhood and youth as it appeared to her own consciousness. We recognize in it her mental acuteness, her clinging affectionateness, her ambition, her outlook beyond the present, her religious and moral preoccupations; even her genius is not so much omitted as left in an undeveloped, rudimentary state. While her make-believe stories, her thirst for knowledge, her spiritual wrestlings, and the passionate response of her soul to high thinking, noble music, and the beautiful in all its forms, show that the making of genius was there in germ. Much in the same manner Gœthe was fond of partitioning his nature, and of giving only the weaker side to his fictitious representatives. Con-

scious in himself of fluctuations of purpose which he only got the better of by his indomitable will, he usually endowed these characters with his more impulsive, pliant self, as manifested in Werther, in Tasso, in Edward of the 'Elective Affinities.' In this sense also Maggie Tulliver resembles George Eliot. She is her potential self, such as she might have been had there not been counterbalancing tendencies of unusual force, sufficient to hold in check all erratic impulses contrary to the main direction of her life.

While tempted to dwell largely on Maggie Tulliver, the central figure of 'The Mill on the Floss,' it would be very unfair to slur over the other admirably drawn characters of this novel. Her brother Tom, already repeatedly alluded to, is in every sense the counterpart of "Sister Maggie." Hard and narrow-minded he was from a boy, "particularly clear and positive on one point, namely, that he would punish everybody who deserved it: why, he would n't have minded being punished himself, if he deserved it; but, then, he never *did* deserve it." This strikes the key-note of a character whose stern inflexibility, combined with much practical insight and dogged persistence of effort, is at the same time dignified by a high, if somewhat narrow, sense of family honor. Conventional respectability, in fact, is Tom Tulliver's religion. He is not in any sense bad, or mean, or sordid; he is only so circumscribed in his perspective faculties that he has no standard by which to measure thoughts or feelings that transcend his own very limited conception of life.

Both by his good and his bad qualities, by his excellences and his negations, Tom Tulliver proves himself what he is — a genuine sprig of the Dodson family, a chip of the old block! And the Dodson sisters are, in their way, among the most amazingly living portraitures that George Eliot ever achieved. Realism in art can go no further in this direction. These women, if present in the flesh, would not be so distinctively vivid as when beheld through the transfixing medium of George Eliot's genius. For here we have the personages, with all their quaintnesses, their eccentricities, their odd, old-fashioned twists and ways — only observed by fragments in actual life — successfully brought to a focus for the delight and amuse-

ment of generations of readers. There is nothing grotesque, nothing exaggerated, in these humorous figures. The comic effect is not produced, as is often the case with the inventions of Dickens, by some set peculiarity of manner or trick of speech, more in the spirit of caricature. On the contrary, it is by a strict adherence to the just mean of nature, by a conscientious care not to overstep her probabilities, that we owe these matchless types of English provincial life. And the genuine humor of these types verges on the pathetic, in that the infinitely little of their lives is so magnified by them out of all proportion to its real importance. Mrs. Glegg, with her dictatorial ways, her small economies, her anxiety to make a handsome figure in her will, and her invariable reference to what was "the way in our family," as a criterion of right behavior on all occasions: Mrs. Pullet, the wife of the well-to-do yeoman-farmer, bent on proving her gentility and wealth by the delicacy of her health, and the quantity of doctor's stuff she can afford to imbibe: Mrs. Tulliver, the good, muddle-headed woman, whose husband "picked her from her sisters o' purpose, 'cause she was a bit weak, like," and for whom the climax of misery in bankruptcy is the loss of her china and table linen: these, as well as the henpecked Mr. Glegg, and the old-maidish Mr. Pullet, are worthy pendants to Mrs. Poyser and Dolly Winthrop.

Whether too great a predominance may not be given to the narrow, trivial views of these people, with their prosaic respectability, is a nice question, which one is inclined to answer in the negative on reading such a conjugal scene as that between Mr. and Mrs. Glegg, after the latter's quarrel with Mr. Tulliver:

"It was a hard case that a vigorous mood for quarrelling, so highly capable of using any opportunity, should not meet with a single remark from Mr. Glegg on which to exercise itself. But by-and-by it appeared that his silence would answer the purpose, for he heard himself apostrophized at last in that tone peculiar to the wife of one's bosom.

"'Well, Mr. Glegg! It 's a poor return I get for making you the wife I 've made you all these years. If this is the way I 'm to be treated, I 'd better ha' known it before my poor

father died, and then when I 'd wanted a home, I should ha' gone elsewhere — as the choice was offered me.'

"Mr. Glegg paused from his porridge and looked up, not with any new amazement, but simply with that quiet, habitual wonder with which we regard constant mysteries.

"'Why, Mrs. G., what have I done now?'

"'Done now, Mr. Glegg? *done now?* . . . I 'm sorry for you.'

"Not seeing his way to any pertinent answer, Mr. Glegg reverted to his porridge.

"'There 's husbands in the world,' continued Mrs. Glegg, after a pause, 'as 'ud have known how to do something different to siding with everybody else against their own wives. Perhaps I 'm wrong, and you can teach me better. But I 've allays heard as it 's the husband's place to stand by the wife, instead of rejoicing and triumphing when folks insult her.'

"'Now what call have you to say that?' said Mr. Glegg, rather warmly, for, though a kind man, he was not as meek as Moses. 'When did I rejoice or triumph over you?'

"'There 's ways o' doing things worse than speaking out plain, Mr. Glegg. I 'd sooner you 'd tell me to my face as you make light of me, than try to make as everybody 's in the right but me, and come to your breakfast in the morning, as I 've hardly slept an hour this night, and sulk at me as if I was the dirt under your feet.'

"'Sulk at you?' said Mr. Glegg, in a tone of angry facetiousness. 'You 're like a tipsy man as thinks everybody 's had too much but himself.'

"'Don't lower yourself with using coarse language to *me*, Mr. Glegg! It makes you look very small, though you can't see yourself,' said Mrs. Glegg, in a tone of energetic compassion. 'A man in your place should set an example, and talk more sensible.'"

After a good deal of sparring in the same tone, Mr. Glegg at last bursts forth: "'Did ever anybody hear the like i' this parish? A woman with everything provided for her, and allowed to keep her own money the same as if it was settled on her, and with a gig new stuffed and lined at no end o' expense, and provided for when I die beyond anything she could ex-

pect . . . to go on i' this way, biting and snapping like a mad dog! It 's beyond everything, as God A'mighty should ha' made women *so*.' (These last words were uttered in a tone of sorrowful agitation. Mr. Glegg pushed his tea from him, and tapped the table with both his hands.)

"'Well, Mr. Glegg! if those are your feelings, it 's best they should be known,' said Mrs. Glegg, taking off her napkin, and folding it in an excited manner. 'But if you talk o' my being provided for beyond what I could expect, I beg leave to tell you as I 'd a right to expect a many things as I don't find. And as to my being like a mad dog, it 's well if you 're not cried shame on by the country for your treatment of me, for it 's what I can't bear, and I won't bear.' . . .

"Here Mrs. Glegg's voice intimated that she was going to cry, and, breaking off from speech, she rang the bell violently.

"'Sally,' she said, rising from her chair, and speaking in rather a choked voice, 'light a fire up-stairs, and put the blinds down. Mr. Glegg, you 'll please order what you like for dinner. I shall have gruel.'"

Equally well drawn in their way, though belonging to a different class of character, are Maggie's cousin, the lovely, gentle, and refined Lucy; Philip Wakem, whose physical malformation is compensated by exceptional culture and nobility of nature; Mr. Tulliver, the headstrong, violent, but withal generous, father of Maggie, and his sister Mrs. Moss, whose motherliness and carelessness of appearances form a striking foil to the Dodson sisters. Indeed, 'The Mill on the Floss' is so rich in minor characters that it is impossible to do more than mention such capital sketches as that of Bob Jakin and his dog Mumps, or of Luke, the head miller, who has no opinion of reading, considering that "There 's fools enoo — an' rogues enoo — wiout lookin' i' books for 'em."

The distinguishing feature of this novel, however, lies not so much in its wealth of portraiture or freshness of humor as in a certain passionate glow of youth, which emanates from the heroine, and seems to warm the story through and through. For passion, pathos, and poetic beauty of description, 'The Mill on the Floss' is certainly unique among George Eliot's works.

CHAPTER X.

SILAS MARNER.

'The Mill on the Floss,' which appeared in 1860, fully established George Eliot's popularity with the public. In the same year she published anonymously, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, a short story called 'The Lifted Veil.' This tale is curious as differing considerably from her general style, having a certain mystical turn, which perhaps recommended it more especially to the admiration of Bulwer Lytton; but, indeed, it attracted general attention. In the meanwhile the relations between author and publisher became more and more friendly; the latter's critical acumen and sound judgment being highly esteemed by George Eliot. "He judged well of writing," she remarked, "because he had learned to judge well of men and things, not merely through quickness of observation and insight, but with the illumination of a heart in the right place."

This was the most productive period of George Eliot's life. In three successive years she published 'Adam Bede,' 'The Mill on the Floss,' and 'Silas Marner,' the last story appearing in 1861. When the amount of thought, observation, and wisdom concentrated in these novels is taken into consideration, it must be admitted that her mental energy was truly astonishing. But it was the accumulated experience of her whole past, the first abundant math borne by the spring-tide of life which was garnered up in these three remarkable works. Afterwards, when she came to write her next book, 'Romola,' she turned to entirely fresh fields of inspiration; indeed, already at this date her mind was occupied with the idea of an Italian novel of the time of Savonarola.

In the meanwhile she produced her most finished work. She wrote 'Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe.' I call 'Silas Marner' her most finished work, not only because of the symmetry with which each part is adjusted in relation to the whole, nor because of the absence of those partly satirical, partly moral reflections with which George Eliot usually ac-

companies the action of her stories, but chiefly on account of the simple pathos of the central motive into which all the different incidents and characters naturally converge. How homely are the elements from which this work of art is constructed, and how matchless the result!

Nothing but the story of a humble weaver belonging to a small dissenting community which assembled in Lantern Yard, somewhere in the back streets of a manufacturing town; of a faithless love and a false friend, and the loss of trust in all things human or divine. Nothing but the story of a lone, bewildered man, shut out from his kind, concentrating every balked passion into one — the all-engrossing passion for gold. And then the sudden disappearance of the hoard from its accustomed hiding-place, and in its stead the startling apparition of a golden-haired little child, found one snowy winter's night sleeping on the floor in front of the glimmering hearth. And the gradual re-awakening of love in the heart of the solitary man, a love "drawing his hope and joy continually onward beyond the money," and once more bringing him into sympathetic relations with his fellow-men.

"In old days," says the story, "there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction; a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward, and the hand may be a little child's."

Curiously enough, I came quite recently upon a story which in its leading features very closely resembles this tale of the 'Weaver of Raveloe.' It is called 'Jermola the Potter,' and is considered the masterpiece of J. I. Kraszewski, the Polish novelist, author of at least one hundred and fifty works in different branches of literature. 'Jermola,' the most popular of them all, has been translated into French, Dutch, and German. It gives an extraordinarily vivid picture of peasant life in a remote Polish village, and not only of peasant life, but of the manners and habits of the landed proprietor, the Jew, the artisan, and the yeoman, in a community whose modes of life have undergone but little modification since the Middle Ages.

These pictures, though not elaborated with anything like the minute care of George Eliot's descriptions of English country life, yet from their extreme simplicity produce a most powerful impression on the reader.

The story, in brief, is that of Jermola, the body servant of a Polish nobleman in Volhynia, whom he has served with rare devotion during the greater part of his life. Left almost a beggar at his master's death, without a single human tie, all he can get for years of faithful service is a tumble-down, forsaken old inn, where he manages to keep body and soul together in a dismantled room that but partly shelters him from the inclemency of the weather. Hopeless, aimless, loveless, he grows old before his time, and the passing of the days affects him hardly more than it does a stone. But one evening, as he is sitting in front of a scanty fire repeating the Lord's Prayer, the cry as of a little child startles him from his devotion. Going to look what can be the meaning of such unusual sounds, he soon discovers an infant in linen swaddling-clothes wailing under an old oak-tree. He takes the foundling home, and from that moment a new life enters the old man's breast. He is rejuvenated by twenty years. He is kept in a constant flutter of hope, fear, and activity. A kind-hearted woman, called the Kozaczicha, tenders him her services, but he is so jealous of any one but himself doing aught for the child, that he checks her advances, and by hook or by crook obtains a goat from an extortionate Jew, by the help of which he rears the boy satisfactorily. Then, wishing to make a livelihood for the child's sake, he inclines at first to the craft of the weaver, but finally turns potter in his old age. Love sharpening his wits, he plies quite a thriving trade in time, and the beautiful boy brings him into more friendly relations with his neighbors. But one day, when Radionek, who has learned Jermola's trade, is about twelve years old, the real parents appear and claim him as their own. They had never dared to acknowledge their marriage till the father, who had threatened to disinherit his son in such an event, had departed this life. Now, having nothing more to fear, they want to have their child back, and to bring him up as befits their station in life. Jermola suffers a deadly anguish at this separation;

the boy, too, is in despair, for he clings fondly to the old man who has reared him with more than a father's love. But the parents insisting on their legal rights, Radionek is at last carried off to their house in town, to be turned into a gentleman, being only grudgingly allowed to see Jermola from time to time. The boy pines, however, for the dear familiar presence of his foster-father, and the free outdoor life, and at last, after some years of misery, he appears one day suddenly in Jermola's hut, who has given up his pottery in order to be secretly near the child he is afraid to go and see. The piteous entreaties of Radionek, and the sight of his now sickly countenance, induce the old man to flee into the pathless forests, where the two may escape unseen, and reach some distant part of the country to take up their old pleasant life once more. But the hardships and fatigues of the journey are too much for the boy's enfeebled health, and just as they come within sight of human dwellings, he is seized with a fever which cuts his young life short, leaving Jermola nearly crazy with anguish. Long afterwards a little decrepit old man was to be seen by churchgoers sitting near a grave, whom the children mocked by calling the "bony little man," because he seemed to consist of nothing but bones.

Such is the bare outline of a story whose main idea, that of the redemption of a human soul from cold, petrifying isolation, by means of a little child, is unquestionably the same as in 'Silas Marner.' Other incidents, such as that of the peasant woman who initiates Jermola into the mysteries of baby management, and the disclosure of the real parents after a lapse of years, wanting to have their child back, suggest parallel passages in the English book. But coincidences of this kind are, after all, natural enough, considering that the circle of human feeling and action is limited, and that in all ages and countries like conditions must give rise to much the same sequence of events. It is therefore most likely that George Eliot never saw, and possibly never even heard of, 'Jermola the Potter.'

The monotonous tone in the narrative of this Polish novel is in strong contrast, it may be observed, to George Eliot's vivid and varied treatment of her subject. This monotony,

however, suits the local coloring of 'Jermola,' by suggesting the idea of the league-long expanse of ancient forests whose sombre solitudes encompass with a mysterious awe the little temporary dwellings of men. But if the foreign story surpasses 'Silas Marner' in tragic pathos, the latter far excels it in the masterly handling of character and dialogue, in the underlying breadth of thought, and, above all, in the precious salt of its humor.

Indeed, for humor, for sheer force, for intense realism, George Eliot, in the immortal scene at the "Rainbow," may be said to rival Shakespeare. Her farriers, her butchers, her wheelwrights, her tailors, have the same startling vitality, the same unmistakable accents of nature, the same distinctive yet unforced individuality, free from either exaggeration or caricature. How delicious is the description of the party assembled in the kitchen of that inn, whose landlord — a strong advocate for compromising whatever differences of opinion may arise between his customers, as beings "all alike in need of liquor" — clinches all arguments by his favorite phrase — "You 're both right and you 're both wrong, as I say." How admirably comic are these villagers, invariably beginning their nightly sittings by a solemn silence, in which one and all puff away at their pipes, staring at the fire "as if a bet were depending on the first man who winked." And when they begin at last, how rich is the flavor of that talk, given with an unerring precision that forthwith makes one acquainted with the crass ignorance and shrewdness, the mother-wit and superstition, so oddly jumbled together in the villager's mind. What sublime absence of all knowledge of his native land is shown by the veteran parish clerk, Mr. Macey, in speaking of a person from another county which apparently could not be so very different "from this country, for he brought a fine breed o' sheep with him, so there must be pastures there, and everything reasonable." Yet the same man can put down youthful presumption pretty sharply, as when he remarks: "There 's allays two 'pinions; there 's the 'pinion a man has o' himsen, and there 's the 'pinion other folks have on him. There 'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself."

Dolly Winthrop, the wife of the jolly wheelwright who makes one of the company at the "Rainbow," is no less admirable. She is not cut after any particular pattern or type of human nature, but has a distinctive individuality, and is full of a freshness and unexpectedness which sets foregone conclusions at defiance. A notable woman, with a boundless appetite for work, so that, rising at half-past four, she has "a bit o' time to spare most days, for when one gets up betimes i' the morning the clock seems to stan' still tow'rt ten, afore it 's time to go about the victual." Yet with all this energy she is not shrewish, but a calm, grave woman, in much request in sick-rooms or wherever there is trouble. She is good-looking, too, and of a comfortable temper, being patiently tolerant of her husband's jokes, "considering that 'men would be so,' and viewing the stronger sex 'in the light of animals whom it pleased Heaven to make troublesome like bulls or turkey-cocks.'"

Her vague idea, shared indeed by Silas, that he has quite another faith from herself, as coming from another part of the country, gives a vivid idea of remote rural life, as well as her own dim, semi-pagan but thoroughly reverential religious feelings, prompting her always to speak of the Divinity in the plural, as when she says to Marner: "I 've looked for help in the right quarter, and give myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up to at the last; and if we 'n done our part, it is n't to be believed as Them as are above us 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o' Theirn."

The humor shown in these scenes and characters, or, more properly speaking, George Eliot's humor in general, belongs to the highest order, the same as Shakespeare's. It is based on the essential elements of human nature itself, on the pathetic incongruities of which that "quintessence of dust," man, is made up, instead of finding the comic in the purely accidental or external circumstances of life, as is the case with such humorists as Rabelais and Dickens. These latter might find a good subject for their comic vein in seeing the Venus of Milo's broken nose, which a mischievous urchin had again stuck on the wrong side upwards — a sight to send the ordinary spectator into fits of laughter. But the genuine humor-

ist sees something in that feature itself, as nature shaped it, to excite his facetiousness. In 'A Minor Prophet' some lines occur in which a somewhat similar view of the genuine source of humor is pithily put:

"My yearnings fail
To reach that high apocalyptic mount
Which shows in bird's-eye view a perfect world,
Or enter warmly into other joys
Than those of faulty, struggling human kind.
That strain upon my soul's too feeble wing
Ends in ignoble floundering: I fall
Into short-sighted pity for the men
Who, living in those perfect future times,
Will not know half the dear imperfect things
That move my smiles and tears — will never know
The fine old incongruities that raise
My friendly laugh; the innocent conceits
That like a needless eyeglass or black patch
Give those who wear them harmless happiness;
The twists and cracks in our poor earthenware,
That touch me to more conscious fellowship
(I am not myself the finest Parian)
With my coevals."

Again, in her essay on 'Heinrich Heine,' George Eliot thus defines the difference between humor and wit: "Humor is of earlier growth than wit, and it is in accordance with this earlier growth that it has more affinity with the poetic tendencies, while wit is more nearly allied to the ratiocinative intellect. Humor draws its materials from situations and characteristics; wit seizes on unexpected and complex relations. . . . It is only the ingenuity, condensation, and instantaneousness which lift some witticisms from reasoning into wit; they are reasoning raised to its highest power. On the other hand, humor, in its higher forms and in proportion as it associates itself with the sympathetic emotions, continually passes into poetry: nearly all great modern humorists may be called prose poets."

The quality which distinguishes George Eliot's humor may be said to characterize her treatment of human nature generally. In her delineations of life she carefully eschews the anomalous or exceptional, pointing out repeatedly that

she would not, if she could, be the writer, however brilliant, who dwells by preference on the moral or intellectual attributes which mark off his hero from the crowd instead of on those which he has in common with average humanity. Nowhere perhaps in her works do we find this tendency so strikingly illustrated as in the one now under consideration; for here we have the study of a human being who, by stress of circumstances, develops into a most abnormal specimen of mankind, yet who is brought back to normal conditions and to wholesome relations with his fellow-men by such a natural process as the re-awakening of benumbed sympathies through his love for the little foundling child. The scene where he finds that child has only been touched on in a passing allusion, yet there is no more powerfully drawn situation in any of her novels than that where Silas, with the child in his arms, goes out into the dark night, and, guided by the little footprints in the virgin snow, discovers the dead mother, Godfrey Cass's opium-eating wife, lying with "her head sunk low in the furze and half covered with the shaken snow." There is a picture of this subject by the young and singularly gifted artist, the late Oliver Madox Brown, more generally known as a novelist, which is one of the few pictorial interpretations that seem to completely project on the canvas a visible embodiment of the spirit of the original. The pale, emaciated weaver, staring with big, short-sighted eyes at the body of the unconscious young woman stretched on the ground, clutching the lusty, struggling child with one arm, while with the other he holds a lantern which throws a feeble gleam on the snow — is realized with exceptional intensity.

The exquisite picture of Eppie's childhood, the dance she leads her soft-hearted foster-father, are things to read, not to describe, unless one could quote whole pages of this delightful idyl, which for gracious charm and limpid purity of description recalls those pearls among prose-poems, George Sand's 'François le Champi' and 'La Mare au Diable.'

CHAPTER XI.

ROMOLA.

'ROMOLA' marks a new departure in George Eliot's literary career. From the present she turned to the past, from the native to the foreign, from the domestic to the historical. Yet in thus shifting her subject-matter, she did not alter the strongly pronounced tendencies underlying her earlier novels; there was more of spontaneous, humorous description of life in the latter, whereas in 'Romola' the ethical teaching which forms so prominent a feature of George Eliot's art, though the same in essence, was more distinctly wrought out. Touching on this very point, she observes in a letter to an American correspondent: "It is perhaps less irrelevant to say, apropos of a distinction you seem to make between my earlier and later works, that though I trust there is some growth in my appreciation of others and in my self-distrust, there has been no change in the point of view from which I regard our life since I wrote my first fiction, the 'Scenes of Clerical Life.' Any apparent change of spirit must be due to something of which I am unconscious. The principles which are at the root of my effort to paint Dinah Morris are equally at the root of my effort to paint Mordecai."

The first section of 'Romola' appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* for the summer of 1862, and, running its course in that popular periodical, was finished in the summer of the following year. Mr. Lewes, in a letter written from 16 Blandford Square, July 5, 1862, to some old friends of George Eliot, makes the following remarks in reference to this new form of publication: "My main object in persuading her to consent to serial publication was not the unheard-of magnificence of the offer, but the advantage to such a work of being read slowly and deliberately, instead of being galloped through in three volumes. I think it quite unique, and so will the public when it gets over the first feeling of surprise and disappointment at the book not being English, and like its predecessor." And some time afterwards he wrote to the

same friends: "Marian lives entirely in the fifteenth century, and is much cheered every now and then by hearing indirectly how her book is appreciated by the higher class of minds, and some of the highest; though it is not, and cannot be popular. In Florence we hear they are wild with delight and surprise at such a work being executed by a foreigner; as if an Italian had ever done anything of the kind!"

Before writing 'Romola' George Eliot had spent six weeks in Florence in order to familiarize herself with the manners and conversation of its inhabitants, and yet she hardly caught the trick of Italian speech, and for some time afterwards she hung back from beginning her story, as her characters not only refused to speak Italian to her, but would not speak at all, as we can well imagine Mrs. Poyser, Bartle Massey, and Maggie to have done. These recalcitrant spirits were at last brought to order, and she succeeded so well, especially in her delineation of the lower classes, that they have been recognized by Italians as true to the life.

It should, however, be mentioned that the greatest modern Italian, Giuseppe Mazzini, found fault with the handling, and, indeed, with the introduction into this novel of the great figure of Savonarola. He considered that it compared unfavorably with 'Adam Bede,' a novel he genuinely admired, all but the marriage of Adam with Dinah Morris, which, he said, shocked his feelings, not having any conception that the taste of the novel-reading public demands a happy ending, whatever may have been the previous course of the three volumes. Another illustrious man, D. G. Rossetti, whose judgment on such a subject carries peculiar weight, considered George Eliot to have been much less successful in 'Romola' than in her novels of English country life. He did not think that the tone and color of Italian life in the fifteenth century were caught with that intuitive perception of a bygone age characteristic of a Walter Scott or a Meinhold. The Florentine contemporaries of "Fra Girolamo" seemed to him Nineteenth Century men and women dressed up in the costume of the Fifteenth. The book, to use his expression, was not "native."

It is a majestic book, however: the most grandly planned of

George Eliot's novels. It has a certain architectural dignity of structure, quite in keeping with its Italian nationality, a quality, by the way, entirely absent from the three later novels. The impressive historical background is not unlike one of Mr. Irving's magnificently wrought Italian stage-effects, rich in movement and color, yet helping to throw the chief figures into greater relief. The erudition shown in this work; the vast yet minute acquaintance with the habits of thought, the manners, the very talk of the Florentines of that day are truly surprising; but perhaps the very fact of that erudition being so perceptible shows that the material has not been absolutely vitalized. The amount of labor George Eliot expended on 'Romola' was so great that it was the book which, she remarked to a friend, "she began a young woman and ended an old one." The deep impression her works had made upon the public mind heightened her natural conscientiousness, and her gratitude for the confidence with which each fresh contribution from her pen was received, increased her anxiety to wield her influence for the highest ends.

But her gratitude to the public by no means extended to the critics. She recoiled from them with the instinctive shrinking of the sensitive plant. These interpreters between author and public were in her eyes a most superfluous modern institution: though at one time she herself had not scorned to sit in the critic's seat. It is well known that G. H. Lewes acted as a kind of moral screen protecting her from every gust or breath of criticism that was not entirely genial. One lady, after reading 'The Mill on the Floss,' had written off in the heat of the moment, and, with the freedom of old friendship, while expressing the warmest admiration for the beauty of the first two volumes, she had ventured to find fault with part of the third. This letter was returned by Lewes, who begged her at the same time never to write again in this strain to George Eliot, to whom he had not ventured to show it for fear it should too painfully affect her. In a letter to the American lady already mentioned, George Eliot, after referring to this habit of Mr. Lewes, says: "In this way I get confirmed in my impression that the criticism of any new writing is shifting and untrustworthy. I hardly think that any critic

can have so keen a sense of the shortcomings in my works as that I groan under in the course of writing them, and I cannot imagine any edification coming to an author from a sort of reviewing which consists in attributing to him or her unexpressed opinions, and in imagining circumstances which may be alleged as petty private motives for the treatment of subjects which ought to be of general human interest. . . . I have been led into this rather superfluous sort of remark by the mention of a rule which seemed to require explanation."

And again on another occasion to the same effect: "But do not expect criticism from me. I hate 'sitting in the seat of judgment,' and I would rather impress the public generally with the sense that they may get the best result from a book without necessarily forming an 'opinion' about it, than I would rush into stating opinions of my own. The floods of nonsense printed in the form of critical opinions seem to me a chief curse of our times — a chief obstacle to true culture."

In spite of these severe strictures on the critics and their opinions, an "opinion" must now be given about 'Romola.' This novel may really be judged from two entirely different points of view, possibly from others besides, but, as it appears to me, from two. One may consider it as an historical work, with its moving pageants, its civic broils, its church festivals, its religious revival, its fickle populace, now siding with the Pope, and now with the would-be reformer of the Papacy. Or again one may regard the conjugal relations between Romola and Tito, the slow spiritual growth of the one, and the swifter moral disintegration of the other, as one of the subtlest studies in psychology in literature.

To turn to the scenic details which form a considerable element of this historical picture, I have already hinted that they are not without a taint of cumbrousness and pedantry. The author seems to move somewhat heavily under her weight of learning, and we miss that splendid natural swiftness and ease of movement which Shakespeare, Goethe, and Hugo know how to impart to their crowds and spectacular effects. If, instead of the people, one examines the man who dominated the people, the large, massive, imposing figure of Savonarola, one must admit that the character is very powerfully and

faithfully executed but not produced at one throw. He does not take the imagination by storm as he would have done had Carlyle been at his fashioning. With an epithet or two, with a sharp, incisive phrase, the latter would have conjured the great Dominican from his grave, and we should have seen him, or believed at least that we saw him, as he was in the flesh when his impassioned voice resounded through the Duomo, swaying the hearts of the Florentine people with the force of a great conviction. That he stands out thus tangibly in 'Romola' it would be futile to assert: nevertheless, he is a noble, powerful study, although one has laboriously to gather into one's mind the somewhat mechanical descriptions which help to portray his individuality. The idea underlying the working out of this grand character is the same which Goethe had once proposed to himself in his projected, but unfortunately never executed, drama of 'Mahomet.' It is that of a man of moral genius, who, in solitude and obscurity, has conceived some new, profounder aspect of religious truth, and who, stirred by a sublime devotion, now goes forth among men to bless and regenerate them by teaching them this higher life. But in his contact with the multitude, in his efforts at influencing it, the prophet or preacher is in his turn influenced. If he fails to move by the loftiest means, he will gradually resort to the lower in order to effect his purpose. The purity of his spirit is tarnished, ambition has crept in where holiness reigned, and his perfect rectitude of purpose will be sacrificed so that he may but rule.

Such are the opposing tendencies co-existing in Savonarola's mixed but lofty nature. For "that dissidence between inward reality and outward seeming was not the Christian simplicity after which he had striven through years of his youth and prime, and which he had preached as a chief fruit of the Divine life. In the heat and stress of the day, with cheeks burning, with shouts ringing in the ears, who is so blest as to remember the yearnings he had in the cool and silent morning, and know that he has not belied them?" And again: "It was the habit of Savonarola's mind to conceive great things, and to feel that he was the man to do them. Iniquity should be brought low; the cause of justice, purity, and love should

triumph, and it should triumph by his voice, by his work, by his blood. In moments of ecstatic contemplation, doubtless, the sense of self melted in the sense of the Unspeakable, and in that part of his experience lay the elements of genuine self-abasement; but in the presence of his fellow-men for whom he was to act, pre-eminence seemed a necessary condition of life." But, as George Eliot says, "Power rose against him, not because of his sins, but because of his greatness; not because he sought to deceive the world, but because he sought to make it noble. And through that greatness of his he endured a double agony; not only the reviling, and the torture, and the death-throe, but the agony of sinking from the vision of glorious achievement into that deep shadow where he could only say, 'I count as nothing: darkness encompasses me; yet the light I saw was the true light.'"

But after all, in George Eliot's story the chief interest attaching to "Fra Girolamo" consists in his influence on Romola's spiritual growth. This may possibly be a blemish; yet in most novels the fictitious characters eclipse the historical ones. The effect produced by the high-souled Romola is not unlike that of an antique statue, at once splendidly beautiful and imposingly cold. By the side of Tito she reminds one of the pure whiteness of marble sculpture as contrasted with the rich glowing sensuousness of a Venetian picture.

It is difficult to analyze why the proud, loving, single-hearted Romola, who has something of the fierceness and impetuosity of the old "Bardo blood" in her, should leave this impression of coldness; for in spite of her acts of magnanimity and self-devotion, such, curiously enough, is the case. Perhaps in this instance George Eliot modelled the character too much according to a philosophical conception instead of projecting it, complete in its incompleteness, as it might have come from the hand of Nature. Another objection sometimes brought forward, of Romola having but little resemblance to an Italian woman of the fifteenth century, seems to me less relevant. The lofty dignity, the pride, the intense adhesion to family traditions, were, on the contrary, very marked attributes of a high national type during the period of Italian supremacy. In fact, the character is not

without hints and suggestions of such a woman as Vittoria Colonna, while its didactic tendency slightly recalls "those awful women of Italy who held professorial chairs, and were great in civil and canon law." In one sense Romola is a true child of the Renaissance. Brought up by her father, the enthusiastic old scholar, in pagan ideas, she had remained aloof from Roman Catholic beliefs and superstitions, and even when transformed by the mighty influence of Savonarola into a devoted *Piagnone*, her attitude always remains more or less that of a Protestant, unwilling to surrender the right of private judgment to the Church.

The clash of character when a woman like Romola finds herself chained in a life-long bond to such a nature as Tito's — the beautiful, wily, insinuating Greek — is wrought out with wonderful skill and matchless subtlety of analysis. Indeed, Tito is not only one of George Eliot's most original creations, he is a unique character in fiction. Novelists, as a rule, only depict the full-blown villain or traitor, their virtuous and wicked people being separated from each other by a hard and fast line much like the goats and sheep. They continually treat character as something permanent and unchangeable, whereas to George Eliot it presents itself as an organism flexible by nature, subject to change under varying conditions, liable on the one hand to disease and deterioration, but on the other hand no less capable of being rehabilitated, refined, or ennobled. This is one of the most distinctive notes of George Eliot's art, and gives a quickening, fructifying quality to her moral teaching. But it is an artistic no less than a moral gain, sharpening the interest felt in the evolution of her fictitious personages. For this reason Tito, the creature of circumstances, is perhaps the most striking of all her characters in the eyes of the psychologist. We seem to see the very pulse of the human machine laid bare, to see the corroding effect of self-indulgence and dread of pain on a nature not intrinsically wicked, to see at last how, little by little, weakness has led to falsehood, and falsehood to infamy. And yet this creature, who, under our eyes, gradually hardens into crime, is one so richly dowered with rare gifts of person and mind, that in spite of

his moral degeneracy, he fascinates the reader no less than the men and women supposed to come into actual contact with him. His beauty is described with the same life-like intensity as Hetty's: the warm glow of color in his perfectly moulded face, with its dark curls and long agate-like eyes; his sunny brightness of look, the velvet softness of a manner with which he ingratiates himself with young and old, and the airy buoyancy of his whole gracious being, are as vividly portrayed as the quick talent to which everything comes natural, the abundant good-humor, the acuteness of a polished intellect, whose sharp edge will, at need, cut relentlessly through every tissue of sentiment.

From Melema's first uneasy debate with himself, when, in his splendid, unsoiled youth, he enters Florence a shipwrecked stranger — a debate, that is, as to whether he is bound to go in search of Baldassare, who has been as a father to him — to the moment when his already blunted conscience absolves him from such a search, and again, on to that supreme crisis when, suddenly face to face with his benefactor, he denies him, and so is inevitably urged from one act of baseness and cruelty to another still blacker — we have unfolded before us, by an unshrinking analyzer of human nature, what might not inappropriately be called "A Soul's Tragedy." The wonderful art in the working out of this character is shown in the fact that one has no positive impression of Tito's innate badness, but, on the contrary, feels as if, after his first lapses from truth and goodness, there is still a possibility of his reforming, if only his soft, pleasure-loving nature were not driven on, almost in spite of himself, by his shuddering dread of shame or suffering in any form. "For," writes George Eliot, "Tito was experiencing that inexorable law of human souls, that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good or evil which gradually determines character."

The description of the married life of Romola and Tito is unsurpassed in George Eliot's novels for subtlety and depth of insight: notably the young wife's fond striving after complete inner harmony, her first, faint, unavowed sense of something wanting, her instinctive efforts to keep fast hold

of her love and trust, and her violent, irrevocable recoil on the discovery of Tito's first faithless action. Perhaps there is something cold, almost stern, in Romola's loathing alienation from her husband, and the instantaneous death of her passionate love. One cannot quite hinder the impression that a softer woman might have forgiven and won from him a confession of his wrong-doing; a confession which would have averted the committal of his worst and basest deeds. Indeed, it is Tito's awe of his grand, noble wife, and his dread of her judgment, which first of all incite him to prevarication and lies.

It is curious to compare George Sand's theory of love, in this instance, with George Eliot's. In 'Leon Leoni,' and in many of her novels besides, the Frenchwoman seems to imply that for a woman to love once is to love always, and that there is nothing so base, or mean, or cruel, but she will forgive the man on whom she has placed her affections. In the story mentioned above she has worked out this idea to an extent which, in many of its details, is simply revolting. Love is there described as a magnetic attraction, unresisted and irresistible, to which the heroine absolutely surrenders pride, reason, and conscience. Just the opposite kind of love is that which we find portrayed in 'Romola': it is a love identical with the fullest belief in the truth and goodness of the beloved object, so that at the first realization of moral obliquity the repulsion created extinguishes that love, although there is no outward severance of the marriage bond.

This great novel closes with these significant words, which Romola addresses to Lillo, Tito's child, but not her own:

"And so, my Lillo, if you mean to act nobly, and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of man, you must learn to fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it. And remember, if you were to choose something lower, and make it the rule of your life to seek your own pleasure and escape from what is disagreeable, calamity might come just the same; and it would be calamity falling on a base mind, which is the one form of sorrow that has no balm in it, and that may well make a man say, 'It would have been better for me if I had never been born!'"

CHAPTER XII.

HER POEMS.

Few are the external events to be now recorded of George Eliot's life. The publication of her successive works forms the chief landmarks. But the year 1865 is distinguished by circumstances of some importance. In this year Mr. Lewes, after assisting to found the *Fortnightly Review*, assumed its editorship; and among the contributions to the first number of the new Review was a short article from the pen of George Eliot on Mr. Lecky's important work 'The Influence of Rationalism.'

In the course of the same year Mr. and Mrs. Lewes moved from 16 Blanford Square to the Priory, a commodious house in North Bank, St. John's Wood, which has come to be intimately associated with the memory of George Eliot. Here, in the pleasant dwelling-rooms decorated by Owen Jones, might be met, at her Sunday afternoon receptions, some of the most eminent men in literature, art, and science. For the rest, her life flowed on its even tenor, its routine being rigidly regulated. The morning till lunch time was invariably devoted to writing: in the afternoon she either went out for a quiet drive of about two hours, or she took a walk with Lewes in Regent's Park. There the strange-looking couple — she with a certain weird, sibylline air, he not unlike some unkempt Polish refugee of vivacious manners — might be seen, swinging their arms, as they hurried along at a pace as rapid and eager as their talk. Besides these walks, George Eliot's chief recreation consisted in frequenting concerts and picture galleries. To music she was passionately devoted, hardly ever failing to attend at the Saturday afternoon concerts at St. James's Hall, besides frequenting various musical réunions, such as the following extract from one of her letters will show: "The other night we went to hear the Bach choir — a society of ladies and gentlemen got together by Jenny Lind, who sings in the middle of them, her husband acting as con-

ductor. It is pretty to see people who might be nothing but simply fashionables taking pains to sing fine music in tune and time, with more or less success. One of the baritones we know is a G——, who used to be a swell guardsman, and has happily taken to good courses while still quite young. Another is a handsome young G——, not of the unsatisfactory Co., but of the R—— G—— kin. A soprano is Mrs. P——, wife of the Queen's Secretary, General P——, the granddaughter of Earl Grey, and just like him in the face — and so on. These people of 'high' birth are certainly reforming themselves a little."

She likewise never omitted to visit the "Exhibition of Old Masters" at Burlington House. To most people few things exercise so great a strain on their mental and physical powers of endurance as the inspection of a picture gallery, with its incessant appeal to the most concentrated attention. Yet, in spite of physical weakness, George Eliot possessed such inexhaustible mental energy that she could go on, hour after hour, looking with the same unflagging interest at whatever possessed any claim to attention, tiring out even vigorous men that were in her company. In her works the allusions to art are much less frequent than to music; but from a few hints here and there, it is possible to form some idea of her taste, one very significant passage in 'Adam Bede' showing her peculiar love of Dutch paintings, and her readiness to turn without shrinking "from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner, while the noonday light, softened perhaps by a screen of leaves, falls on her mob-cap, and just touches the rim of her spinning-wheel and her stone jug, and all those cheap common things which are the precious necessaries of life to her."

Another favorite resort of George Eliot's was the Zoölogical Gardens. She went there a great deal to study the animals, and was particularly fond of the "poor dear ratel" that used to turn somersaults. In fact, her knowledge of, and sympathy with, animals was as remarkable as that which she showed for human nature. Thus she astonished a gentleman farmer by drawing attention to the fine points of his horses. Her

intimate acquaintance with the dog comes out in a thousand touches in her novels, and her humorous appreciation of little pigs led her to watch them attentively, and to pick out some particular favorite in every litter. In her country rambles, too, she was fond of turning over stones to inspect the minute insect life teeming in moist, dark places; and she was as interested as Lewes himself in the creatures, frogs, etc., he kept for scientific purposes, and which would sometimes, like the frog in the fairy tale, surprise the household by suddenly making their entrance into the dining-room. Her liking for the "poor brutes," as she calls them, had its origin no doubt in the same source of profound pity which she feels for "the twists and cracks" of imperfect human beings.

Her evenings were usually passed at home, and spent in reading, or in playing and singing; but she and Lewes used to go to the theatre on any occasion of special interest, as when Salvini appeared in 'Othello,' a performance attended repeatedly by both with enthusiastic delight. Otherwise they rarely left home, seldom visiting at other people's houses, although they made an exception in the case of a favored few.

They were both fond of travelling, and, whenever it was possible, would take trips to the Continent, or seek some quiet English rural retreat away from the sleepless tumult of London. "For," says Lewes incidentally in a letter, "Mrs. Lewes never seems at home except under a broad sweep of sky and the *greenth* of the uplands round her." So we find them frequently contriving a change of scene; and the visits to foreign countries, the pleasant sauntering on long summer days through Continental towns, "dozing round old cathedrals," formed delightful episodes in George Eliot's strenuously active life. The residence in Germany in 1854, and again in 1858, has already been alluded to. Now, in the year 1865, they paid a short visit to France, in the course of which they saw Normandy, Brittany, and Touraine, returning much refreshed at the beginning of the autumn. Two years afterwards they went to Spain, a country that must have possessed a peculiar interest for both; for in 1846 Lewes had published a charming, if one-sided, little book on 'The Spanish Drama,' with especial reference to Lope de Vega and Calderon; and in 1864, only a

year after the appearance of 'Romola,' George Eliot produced the first draught of 'The Spanish Gypsy.' On becoming personally acquainted with this land of "old romance," however, her impressions were so far modified and deepened that she re-wrote and amplified her poem, which was not published till 1868.

The subject of the gypsies was probably suggested to George Eliot by her own memorable adventure in childhood, which thus became the germ of a very impressive poem. Be that as it may, it is worth noticing that the conception of 'The Spanish Gypsy' should have followed so closely on the completion of the Italian novel, both being foreign subjects, belonging to much the same period of history. In both the novelist has departed from her habitual track, seeking for "pastures new" in a foreign soil. After inculcating on the artist the desirability of giving "the loving pains of a life to the faithful representation of commonplace things," she remarks in 'Adam Bede' that "there are few prophets in the world, few sublimely beautiful women, few heroes," and that we cannot afford to give all our love and reverence to such rarities. But having followed this rule, and given the most marvellously truthful delineations of her fellow-men as they are ordinarily to be met with, she now also felt prompted to draw the exceptional types of human character, the rare prophets, and the sublime heroes.

To her friend Miss Simcox, George Eliot one day mentioned a plan of giving "the world an ideal portrait of an actual character in history, whom she did not name, but to whom she alluded as an object of possible reverence unmingled with disappointment." This idea was never carried out, but at any rate Dinah Morris, Savonarola, Zarca, and Mordecai are all exceptional beings — beings engrossed by an impersonal aim, having the spiritual or national regeneration of their fellow-men for its object. Dinah and Savonarola are more of the nature of prophets; Zarca and Mordecai of that of patriots. Among these the fair Methodist preacher, whose yearning piety is only a more sublimated love of her kind, is the most vividly realized; while Mordecai, the patriot of an ideal country, is but the abstraction of a man, entirely wanting in that

indefinable solidity of presentation which gives a life of its own to the creations of art.

On the whole, Zarca, the gypsy chief, is perhaps the most vividly drawn of George Eliot's purely ideal characters — characters which never have the flesh-and-blood reality of her Mrs. Poysers, her Silas Marners, and her dear little Totties and Eppies. Yet there is an unmistakable grandeur and power of invention in the heroic figure of Zarca, although, in spite of this power, we miss the convincing stamp of reality in him, and not only in him, but more or less in all the characters of 'The Spanish Gypsy.' George Eliot's feeling for the extraordinary and romantic was very subordinate to that which she entertained for the more familiar aspects of our life. For, although she here chose one of the most romantic of periods and localities, the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, with the mingled horror and magnificence of its national traditions, she does not really succeed in resuscitating the spirit which animated those devout, cruel, fanatical, but ultra-picturesque times. The Castilian noble, the Jewish astrologer, Zarca, and the Spanish Inquisitor, even the bright, gloriously conceived Fedalma herself, think and speak too much like sublimated modern positivists. For example, would, could, or should any gypsy of the fifteenth century have expressed himself in the following terms:

> "Oh, it is a faith
> Taught by no priest, but by this beating heart:
> Faith to each other: the fidelity
> Of fellow-wanderers in a desert place,
> Who share the same dire thirst, and therefore share
> The scanty water: the fidelity
> Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
> Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands,
> The speech that even in lying tells the truth
> Of heritage inevitable as birth,
> Nay, in the silent bodily presence feel
> The mystic stirring of a common life
> Which makes the many one: fidelity
> To the consecrating oath our sponsor Fate
> Made through our infant breath when we were born
> The fellow-heirs of that small island, Life,
> Where we must dig and sow and reap with brothers.

> Fear thou that oath, my daughter — nay, not fear,
> But love it; for the sanctity of oaths
> Lies not in lightning that avenges them,
> But in the injury wrought by broken bonds
> And in the garnered good of human trust."

The poetic mode of treatment corresponds to the exalted theme of 'The Spanish Gypsy,' a subject certainly fitted for drama or romance rather than for the novel, properly so called. Nothing could apparently be better adapted for the purposes of a noble historical poem than the conception of a great man such as Zarca, whose aim is nothing less than the fusion of the scattered, wandering, lawless gypsy tribes into one nation, with common traditions and a common country: the romantic incident of the discovery of his lost daughter in the affianced bride of Silva, Duke of Bedmar: the supreme conflict in Fedalma's breast between love and duty, her renunciation of happiness in order to cast in her lot with that of her outcast people: Silva's frantic grief, his desertion of his country, his religion, and all his solemn responsibilities to turn gypsy for Fedalma's sake, and having done so, his agony of remorse on seeing the fortress committed to his trust taken by the gypsies he has joined, his dearest friends massacred, his nearest of kin, Isidor, the inquisitor, hanged before his very eyes, a sight so maddening that, hardly conscious of his act, he slays Zarca, and so divides himself forever, by an impassable gulf, from the woman for whose sake he had turned apostate.

Clearly a subject containing the highest capabilities, and, if great thoughts constituted a great poem, this should be one of the greatest. But with all its high merits, its sentiments imbued with rare moral grandeur, its felicitous descriptions, the work lacks that best and incommunicable gift which comes by nature to the poet. Here, as in her novels, we find George Eliot's instinctive insight into the primary passions of the human heart, her wide sympathy and piercing keenness of vision; but her thoughts, instead of being naturally winged with melody, seem mechanically welded into song. This applies to all her poetic work, although some of it, especially 'The Legend of Jubal,' reaches a much higher degree of metrical and rhythmical excellence. But although George

Eliot's poems cannot be considered on a par with her prose, they possess a distinctive interest, and should be carefully studied by all lovers of her genius, as affording a more intimate insight into the working of her own mind. Nowhere do we perceive so clearly as here the profound sadness of her view of life; nowhere does she so emphatically reiterate the stern lesson of the duty of resignation and self-sacrifice; or that other doctrine that the individual is bound absolutely to subordinate his personal happiness to the social good, that he has no rights save the right of fulfilling his obligations to his age, his country, and his family. This idea is perhaps more completely incorporated in Fedalma than in any other of her characters — Fedalma, who seems so bountifully endowed with the fullest measure of beauty, love, and happiness, that her renunciation may be the more absolute. She who in her young joy suddenly knows herself as "an aged sorrow," exclaiming:

> "I will not take a heaven
> Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.
> This deed and I have ripened with the hours:
> It is a part of me — a wakened thought
> That, rising like a giant, masters me,
> And grows into a doom. O mother life,
> That seemed to nourish me so tenderly,
> Even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,
> Hung on my soul the burden of men's hopes,
> And pledged me to redeem! — I'll pay the debt.
> You gave me strength that I should pour it all
> Into this anguish. I can never shrink
> Back into bliss — my heart has grown too big
> With things that might be."

This sacrifice is the completer for being without hope; for not counting "on aught but being faithful;" for resting satisfied in such a sublime conviction as —

> "The grandest death, to die in vain — for love
> Greater than sways the forces of the world."

Limit forbids me dwell longer on this poem, which contains infinite matter for discussion, yet some of the single passages are so full of fine thoughts felicitously expressed that it

would be unfair not to allude to them. Such a specimen as this exposition of the eternal dualism between the Hellenic and the Christian ideals, of which Heine was the original and incomparable expounder, should not be left unnoted:

> "Forevermore
> With grander resurrection than was feigned
> Of Attila's fierce Huns, the soul of Greece
> Conquers the bulk of Persia. The maimed form
> Of calmly joyous beauty, marble-limbed,
> Yet breathing with the thought that shaped its limbs,
> Looks mild reproach from out its opened grave
> At creeds of terror; and the vine-wreathed god
> Fronts the pierced Image with the crown of thorns."

And again how full of deep mysterious suggestion is this line —

> "Speech is but broken light upon the depth
> Of the unspoken."

And this grand saying —

> "What times are little? To the sentinel
> That hour is regal when he mounts on guard."

Quotations of this kind might be indefinitely multiplied; while showing that exaltation of thought properly belonging to poetry, they at the same time indubitably prove to the delicately attuned ear the absence of that subtle intuitive music, that "linked sweetness" of sound and sense which is the birthright of poets. If an intimate and profound acquaintance with the laws and structure of metre could bestow this quality, which appertain to the elemental, George Eliot's verse ought to have achieved the highest success. For in mere technical knowledge concerning rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and the manipulation of blank verse according to the most cunning distribution of pauses, she could hold her own with the foremost contemporary poets, being no doubt far more versed than either Shelley or Byron in the laws governing these matters.

How incalculable she felt the poet's influence to be, and how fain she would have had him wield this influence only

for the loftiest ends, is well shown in a beautiful letter, hitherto unpublished, now possessing an added pathos as addressed to one who has but lately departed, at the very time when his rare poetic gifts were beginning to be more widely recognized. James Thomson, the author of 'The City of Dreadful Night,' a poem which appeared first in the pages of the *National Reformer*, with the signature of "B. V.," was thus addressed by George Eliot:

"DEAR POET, — I cannot rest satisfied without telling you that my mind responds with admiration to the distinct vision and grand utterance in the poem which you have been so good as to send me.

"Also, I trust that an intellect informed by so much passionate energy as yours will soon give us more heroic strains, with a wider embrace of human fellowship, such as will be to the laborers of the world what the Odes of Tyrtæus were to the Spartans, thrilling them with the sublimity of the social order and the courage of resistance to all that would dissolve it. To accept life and write much fine poetry, is to take a very large share in the quantum of human good, and seems to draw with it necessarily some recognition, affectionate, and even joyful, of the manifold willing labors which have made such a lot possible."

These words are of peculiar interest, because, although the writer of them is almost as much of a pessimist as its recipient, they are so with a difference. The pessimism of 'The City of Dreadful Night,' in its blank hopelessness, paralyzes the inmost nerve of life by isolating the individual in cold obstruction. Whereas George Eliot, while recognizing to the utmost "the burthen of a world, where even the sunshine has a heart of care," insists the more on the fact that this common suffering binds man more indissolubly to man; that so far from justifying him in ending his life "when he will," the groaning and travailing generations exact that he should stand firm at his post, regardless of personal consideration or requital, so long only as he can help towards making the fate of his fellow-mortals less heavy for them to bear. In fact, the one is a theory of life, the other a disease of the soul.

The same stoic view, in a different form, finds expression in this answer to a dear friend's query: "I cannot quite agree

that it is hard to see what has been the good of your life. It seems to me very clear that you have been a good of a kind that would have been sorely missed by those who have been nearest to you, and also by some who are more distant. And it is this kind of good which must reconcile us to life, and not any answer to the question, 'What would the universe have been without me?' The point one has to care for is, 'Are A, B, and C the better for me?' And there are several letters of the alphabet that could not have easily spared you in the past, and that can still less spare you in the present."

This lesson of resignation, which is enforced more and more stringently in her writings, is again dwelt upon with peculiar emphasis in the interesting dramatic sketch entitled 'Armgart.' The problem here is not unlike that in 'Silas Marner.' It is that of an individual, in exceptional circumstances, brought back to the average condition of humanity; but whereas Silas, having sunk below the common standard, is once more united to his fellow-men by love, the magnificently endowed Armgart, who seems something apart and above the crowd, is reduced to the level of the undistinguished million by the loss of her peerless voice. 'Armgart' is the single instance, excepting, perhaps, the Princess Halm-Eberstein, where George Eliot has attempted to depict the woman-artist, to whom life's highest object consists in fame —

> "The benignant strength of one, transformed
> To joy of many."

But in the intoxicating flush of success, the singer, who has refused the love of *one* for that "sense transcendent which can taste the joy of swaying multitudes," loses her glorious gift, and so sinks irretrievably to a "drudge among the crowd." In the first delirium of despair she longs to put an end to herself, "sooner than bear the yoke of thwarted life;" but is painfully startled from her defiant mood by the indignant query of Walpurga, her humble cousin —

> "Where is the rebel's right for you alone?
> Noble rebellion lifts a common load;
> But what is he who flings his own load off
> And leaves his fellows toiling? Rebel's right?

> Say rather the deserter's. Oh, you smiled
> From your clear height on all the million lots
> Which yet you brand as abject."

It may seem singular that having once, in 'Armgart,' drawn a woman of the highest artistic aims and ambitions, George Eliot should imply that what is most valuable in her is not the exceptional gift, but rather that part of her nature which she shares with ordinary humanity. This is, however, one of her leading beliefs, and strongly contrasts her, as a teacher, with Carlyle. To the author of 'Hero Worship' the promiscuous mass — moiling and toiling as factory hands and artisans, as miners and laborers — only represents so much raw material, from which is produced that final result and last triumph of the combination of human forces — the great statesman, great warrior, great poet, and so forth. To George Eliot, on the contrary — and this is the democratic side of her nature — it is the multitude, so charily treated by destiny, which claims deepest sympathy and tenderest compassion; so that all greatness, in her eyes, is not a privilege, but a debt, which entails on its possessor a more strenuous effort, a completer devotion to the service of average humanity.

CHAPTER XIII.

FELIX HOLT AND MIDDLEMARCH.

In 'Felix Holt,' which was published in 1866, George Eliot returned once more to her own peculiar field, where she stands supreme and unrivalled — the novel of English provincial life. This work, which, however, is not equal to her earlier or later fictions, yet possesses a double interest for us. It is the only one of her writings from which its author's political views may be inferred, if we exclude a paper published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in January 1868, which, indeed, seems to be part of the novel, seeing that it is entitled "Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt." The paper contains, in a more direct and concise form, precisely the same general views as

regards the principles of government which were previously enunciated through Felix the Radical. It was an appeal to the operative classes who had been only recently enfranchised by the Reform Bill. Its advice is mainly to the effect that genuine political and social improvements to be durable must be the result of inward change rather than of outward legislation. The writer insists on the futility of the belief that beneficial political changes can be effected by revolutionary measures. She points out the necessity of a just discrimination between what is curable in the body politic and what has to be endured. She dwells once again, with solemn insistence, on the "aged sorrow," the inheritance of evil transmitted from generation to generation, an evil too intimately entwined with the complex conditions of society to be violently uprooted, but only to be gradually eradicated by the persistent cultivation of knowledge, industry, judgment, sobriety, and patience.

"This is only one example," she says, "of the law by which human lives are linked together; another example of what we complain of when we point to our pauperism, to the brutal ignorance of multitudes among our fellow-countrymen, to the weight of taxation laid on us by blamable wars, to the wasteful channels made for the public money, to the expense and trouble of getting justice, and call these the effects of bad rule. This is the law that we all bear the yoke of; the law of no man's making, and which no man can undo. Everybody now sees an example of it in the case of Ireland. We who are living now are sufferers by the wrong-doing of those who lived before us; we are sufferers by each other's wrong-doing; and the children who come after us will be sufferers from the same causes."

To remedy this long-standing wrong-doing and suffering, so argues Felix Holt, is not in the power of any one measure, class, or period. It would be childish folly to expect any Reform Bill to possess the magical property whereby a sudden social transformation could be accomplished. On the contrary, abrupt transitions should be shunned as dangerous to order and law, which alone are certain to insure a steady collective progress; the only means to this end consisting in the general

spread of education, to secure which, at least for his children, the working-man should spare no pains. Without knowledge, the writer continues, no political measures will be of any benefit, ignorance with or without vote always of necessity engendering vice and misery. But, guided by a fuller knowledge, the working classes would be able to discern what sort of men they should choose for their representatives, and instead of electing "platform swaggerers, who bring us nothing but the ocean to make our broth with," they would confide the chief power to the hands of the truly wise, those who know how to regulate life "according to the truest principles mankind is in possession of."

The "Felix Holt" of the story is described by George Eliot as shaping his actions much according to the ideas which are here theoretically expressed. His knowledge and aptitude would enable him to choose what is considered a higher calling. But he scorns the vulgar ambition called "getting on in the world;" his sense of fellowship prompting him to remain a simple artisan that he may exert an elevating influence on the class to which he belongs. Class differences, so argues this Radical-Conservative, being inherent in the constitution of society, it becomes something of a desertion to withdraw what abilities one may have from the medium where they are urgently needed, in order to join, for the sake of selfish aims, some other body of men where they may be superfluous.

The other distinctive feature of 'Felix Holt' consists in its elaborate construction, ranking it, so to speak, amongst sensational novels. As a rule, George Eliot's stories have little or no plot, the incidents seeming not so much invented by the writer for the sake of producing an effective work, as to be the natural result of the friction between character and circumstance. This simplicity of narrative belongs, no doubt, to the highest class of novel, the class to which 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Waverley,' and 'Vanity Fair' belong. In 'Felix Holt,' however, the intricate network of incident in which the characters seem to be enmeshed is not unlike the modern French art of story-telling, with its fertility of invention, as is also the strangely repellent intrigue which forms the nu-

cleus of the whole. All the elements which go to make up a thrilling narrative — such as a dubious inheritance, the disappearance of the rightful claimant, a wife's guilty secret, the involvements of the most desperate human fates in a perplexing coil through sin and error — are interwoven in this story of 'Felix Holt the Radical.'

Though ingeniously invented, the different incidents seem not so much naturally to have grown the one from the other as to be constructed with too conscious a seeking for effect. There is something forced, uneasy, and inadequate in the laborious contrivance of fitting one set of events on to another, and the machinery of the disputed Transome claim is so involved that the reader never masters the "ins" and "outs" of that baffling mystery. Still, the groundwork of the story is deeply impressive: its interest is, notwithstanding the complex ramification of events, concentrated with much power upon a small group of personages, such as Mrs. Transome, her son Harold, the little dissenting minister, Rufus Lyon, Esther, and Felix Holt. Here, as elsewhere, the novelist reveals the potent qualities of her genius. Not only does this story contain such genuine humorous portraiture as the lachrymose Mrs. Holt, and the delightfully quaint Job Tudge, but it is also enriched by some descriptions of rural scenery and of homely existence in remote country districts as admirable as any to be found in her writings. Rufus Lyon is a worthy addition to that long gallery of clerical portraits which are among the triumphs of George Eliot's art. This "singular-looking apostle of the meeting in Skipper's Lane" — with his rare purity of heart, his unworldliness, his zeal in the cause of dissent, his restless argumentative spirit, and the moving memories of romance and passion hidden beneath the odd, quaint *physique* of the little minister encased in rusty black — is among the most loving and lovable of characters, and recalls more particularly that passage in the poem entitled 'A Minor Prophet,' which I cannot but think one of the author's finest, the passage beginning —

> "The pathos exquisite of lovely minds
> Hid in harsh forms — not penetrating them
> Like fire divine within a common bush
> Which glows transfigured by the heavenly guest,

So that men put their shoes off ; but encaged
Like a sweet child within some thick-walled cell,
Who leaps and fails to hold the window-bars,
But having shown a little dimpled hand,
Is visited thenceforth by tender hearts
Whose eyes keep watch about the prison walls."

Esther, on the other hand, is one of those fortunate beings whose lovely mind is lodged in a form of corresponding loveliness. This charming Esther, though not originally without her feminine vanities and worldly desires, is one of those characters dear to George Eliot's heart, who renounce the allurements of an easy pleasurable existence for the higher satisfactions of a noble love or a nobler ideal. It is curious to notice that Eppie, Esther, Fedalma, and Daniel Deronda are all children who have been reared in ignorance of their real parentage, and that to all of them there comes a day when a more or less difficult decision has to be made, when for good or evil they have to choose, once for all, between two conflicting claims. Like Eppie, Esther rejects the advantages of birth and fortune, and elects to share the hard but dignified life of the high-minded Felix. But this decision in her case shows even higher moral worth, because by nature she is so keenly susceptible to the delicate refinements and graceful elegancies which are the natural accompaniment of rank and wealth.

The most curious feature of this book consists, perhaps, in its original treatment of illicit passion. Novelists, as a rule, when handling this subject, depict its fascinations in brilliant contrast to the sufferings and terrors which follow in its train. But George Eliot contents herself with showing us the reverse side of the medal. Youth has faded, joy is dead, love has turned to loathing, yet memory, like a relentless fury, pursues the gray-haired Mrs. Transome, who hides within her breast such a heavy load of shame and dread. The power and intensity with which this character of the haughty, stern, yet inwardly quailing woman is drawn are unsurpassed in their way, and there is tragic horror in the recoil of her finest sensibilities from the vulgar, mean, self-complacent lawyer, too thick-skinned ever to know that in his own person he is a daily judgment on her whose life has been made hideous for his sake. Never more impressively than here does the novelist

enforce her teaching that the deed follows the doer, being imbued with an incalculable vitality of its own, shaping all after life, and subduing to its guise the nature that is in bondage to it. Like those fabled dragon's teeth planted by Cadmus, which sprung up again as armed men, spreading discord and ruin, so a man's evil actions seem endowed with independent volition, and their consequences extend far beyond the individual life where they originated.

If 'Felix Holt' is the most intricately constructed of George Eliot's novels, 'Middlemarch,' which appeared five years afterwards, is, on the other hand, a story without a plot. In fact, it seems hardly appropriate to call it a novel. Like Hogarth's serial pictures representing the successive stages in their progress through life of certain typical characters, so in this book there is unrolled before us, not so much the history of any particular individual, as a whole phase of society portrayed with as daring and uncompromising a fidelity to Nature as that of Hogarth himself. In 'Middlemarch,' English provincial life in the first half of the nineteenth century is indelibly fixed in words "holding a universe impalpable" for the apprehension and delight of the furthest generations of English-speaking nations. Here, as in some kind of panorama, sections of a community and groups of character pass before the mind's eye. To dwell on the separate, strongly individualized figures which constitute this great crowd would be impossible within the present limits. But from the county people such as the Brookes and Chettams, to respectable middle-class families of the Vincy and Garth type, down to the low, avaricious, harpy-tribes of the Waules and Featherstones, every unit of this complex social agglomeration is described with a life-like vividness truly amazing, when the number and variety of the characters especially are considered. I know not where else in literature to look for a work which leaves such a strong impression on the reader's mind of the intertexture of human lives. Seen thus in perspective, each separate individuality, with its specialized consciousness, is yet as indissolubly connected with the collective life as that of the indistinguishable zoöphyte which is but a sentient speck necessarily moved by the same vital agency which stirs the entire organism.

Among the figures which stand out most prominently from the crowded background are Dorothea, Lydgate, Casaubon, Rosamond Vincy, Ladislaw, Bulstrode, Caleb, and Mary Garth. Dorothea belongs to that stately type of womanhood, such as Romola and Fedalma, a type which seems to be specifically George Eliot's own, and which has perhaps more in common with such Greek ideals as Antigone and Iphigenia, than with more modern heroines. But Dorothea, however lofty her aspirations, has not the Christian heroism of Romola, or the antique devotion of Fedalma. She is one of those problematic natures already spoken of; ill-adjusted to her circumstances, and never quite adjusting circumstances to herself. It is true that her high aims and glorious possibilities are partially stifled by a social medium where there seems no demand for them: still the resolute soul usually finds some way in which to work out its destiny.

"Many 'Theresas,'" says George Eliot, "have been born who found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure which found no sacred poet, and sank unwept into oblivion. With dim lights and tangled circumstance they tried to shape their thought and deed in noble agreement; but, after all, to common eyes, their struggles seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness; for these later-born 'Theresas' were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul.

"Some have felt that these blundering lives are due to the inconvenient indefiniteness with which the Supreme Power has fashioned the natures of women; if there were one level of feminine incompetence as strict as the ability to count three and no more, the social lot of woman might be treated with scientific certitude. Meanwhile the indefiniteness remains, and the limits of variation are really much wider than any one would imagine from the sameness of women's coiffure, and the favorite love-stories in prose and verse."

Such a life of mistakes is that of the beautiful Dorothea,

the ill-starred wife of Casaubon. In his way the character of Casaubon is as great a triumph as that of Tito himself. The novelist seems to have crept into the inmost recesses of that uneasy consciousness, to have probed the most sensitive spots of that diseased vanity, and to lay bare before our eyes the dull labor of a brain whose ideas are still-born. In an article by Mr. Myers it is stated, however incredible it may sound, that an undiscriminating friend once condoled with George Eliot on the melancholy experience which, from her knowledge of Lewes, had taught her to depict the gloomy character of Casaubon; whereas, in fact, there could not be a more striking contrast than that between the pedant groping amid dim fragments of knowledge, and the vivacious *littérateur* and thinker with his singular mental energy and grasp of thought. On the novelist's laughingly assuring him that such was by no means the case, "From whom, then," persisted he, "did you draw 'Casaubon'?" With a humorous solemnity, which was quite in earnest, she pointed to her own heart. She confessed, on the other hand, having found the character of Rosamond Vincy difficult to sustain, such complacency of egoism, as has been pointed out, being alien to her own habit of mind. But she laid no claim to any such natural magnanimity as could avert Casaubon's temptations of jealous vanity, and bitter resentment.

If there is any character in whom one may possibly trace some suggestions of Lewes, it is in the versatile, brilliant, talented Ladislaw, who held, that while genius must have the utmost play for its spontaneity, it may await with confidence "those messages from the universe which summon it to its peculiar work, only placing itself in an attitude of receptivity towards all sublime chances." But however charming, the impression Ladislaw produces is that of a somewhat shallow, frothy character, so that he seems almost as ill-fitted for Dorothea as the dreary Casaubon himself. Indeed, the heroine's second marriage seems almost as much a failure as the stultifying union of Lydgate with Rosamond Vincy, and has altogether a more saddening effect than the tragic death of Maggie, which is how much less pitiful than that death in life of the fashionable doctor, whose best aims and vital purposes have been killed by his wife.

Much might be said of Bulstrode, the sanctimonious hypocrite, who is yet not altogether a hypocrite, but has a vein of something resembling goodness running through his crafty character; of Farebrother, the lax, amiable, genuinely honorable vicar of St. Botolph's; of Mrs. Cadwallader, the glib-tongued, witty, meddling rector's wife, a kind of Mrs. Poyser of high life; of Caleb Garth, whose devotion to work is a religion, and whose likeness to Mr. Robert Evans has already been pointed out; of the whole-hearted, sensible Mary, and of many other supremely vivid characters, whom to do justice to would carry us too far.

'Middlemarch' is the only work of George Eliot's, I believe, in which there is a distinct indication of her attitude towards the aspirations and clearly formulated demands of the women of the nineteenth century. Her many sarcastic allusions to the stereotyped theory about woman's sphere show on which side her sympathies were enlisted. On the whole, she was more partial to the educational movement than to that other agitation which aims at securing the political enfranchisement of women. How sincerely she had the first at heart is shown by the donation of 50*l.* "From the author of 'Romola,'" when Girton College was first started. And in a letter to a young lady who studied there, and in whose career she was much interested, she says, "the prosperity of Girton is very satisfactory." Among her most intimate friends, too, were some of the ladies who had initiated and organized the Women's Suffrage movement. Likewise writing to Miss Phelps, she alludes to the Woman's Lectureship in Boston, and remarks concerning the new University: "An office that may make a new precedent in social advance, and which is at the very least an experiment that ought to be tried. America is the seed-ground and nursery of new ideals, where they can grow in a larger, freer air than ours."

In 1871, the year when 'Middlemarch' was appearing in parts, George Eliot spent part of the spring and summer months at Shottermill, a quaint Hampshire village situated amid a landscape that unites beauties of the most varied kind. Here we may imagine her and Mr. Lewes, after their day's work was done, either seeking the vast stretch of heath and

common only bounded by the horizon, or strolling through the deep-sunk lanes, or finding a soothing repose in "places of nestling green for poets made." They had rented Brookbank, an old-fashioned cottage with tiled roof and lattice-paned windows, belonging to Mrs. Gilchrist, the widow of the distinguished biographer of William Blake.

The description of Mrs. Meyrick's house in 'Daniel Deronda' "where the narrow spaces of wall held a world-history in scenes and heads," may have been suggested by her present abode, rich in original drawings by Blake, and valuable prints, and George Eliot writes: "If I ever steal anything in my life, I think it will be the two little Sir Joshuas over the drawing-room mantelpiece." At this time she and Mr. Lewes also found intense interest in reading the 'Life of Blake.' Some correspondence, kindly placed at my disposal by Mrs. Gilchrist, passed between this lady and the Leweses in connection with the letting of the house, giving interesting glimpses into the domesticities of the latter. Their habits here, as in London, were of clock-work regularity, household arrangements being expected to run on wheels. "Everything," writes George Eliot, "goes on slowly at Shottermill, and the mode of narration is that typified in 'This is the house that Jack built.' But there is an exquisite stillness in the sunshine and a sense of distance from London hurry, which encourages the growth of patience.

"Mrs. G——'s" (their one servant) "pace is proportionate to the other slownesses, but she impresses me as a worthy person, and her cooking — indeed, all her attendance on us — is of satisfactory quality. But we find the awkwardness of having only one person in the house, as well as the advantage (this latter being quietude). The butcher does not bring the meat, everybody grudges selling new milk, eggs are scarce, and an expedition we made yesterday in search of fowls showed us nothing more hopeful than some chickens six weeks old, which the good woman observed were sometimes 'eaten by the gentry with asparagus.' Those eccentric people, the gentry!

"But have we not been reading about the siege of Paris all the winter, and shall we complain while we get excellent

bread and butter and many etceteras? . . . Mrs. S —— kindly sent us a dish of asparagus, which we ate (without the skinny chicken) and had a feast.

"You will imagine that we are as fond of eating as Friar Tuck — I am enlarging so on our commissariat. But you will also infer that we have no great evils to complain of, since I make so much of the small."

George Eliot rarely went out in the daytime during her stay at Shottermill, but in the course of her rambles she would sometimes visit such cottagers in remote places as were not likely to know who she was. She used also to go and see a farmer's wife living at a short distance from Brookbank, with whom she would freely chat about the growth of fruits and vegetables and the quality of butter, much to the astonishment of the simple farm people. Speaking of her recollection of the great novelist to an American lady by whom these facts are recorded, the old countrywoman remarked: "It were wonderful, just wonderful, the sight o' green peas that I sent down to that gentleman and lady every week."

After the lapse of a few months spent in this sweet rural retreat, George Eliot again writes to Mrs. Gilchrist: "I did not imagine that I should ever be so fond of the place as I am now. The departure of the bitter winds, some improvement in my health, and the gradual revelation of fresh and fresh beauties in the scenery, especially under a hopeful sky such as we have sometimes had — all these conditions have made me love our little world here, and wish not to quit it until we can settle in our London home. I have the regret of thinking that it was my original indifference about it (I hardly ever like things until they are familiar) that hindered us from securing the cottage until the end of September."

George Eliot's conscientiousness and precision in the small affairs of life are exemplified in her last note to Mrs. Gilchrist: "After Mr. Lewes had written to you, I was made aware that a small dessert or bread-and-butter dish had been broken. That arch-sinner, the cat, was credited with the guilt. I am assured by Mrs. G—— that nothing else has been injured during her reign, and Mrs. L—— confirmed the

statement to me yesterday. I wish I could replace the unfortunate dish. . . . This note, of course, needs no answer, and it is intended simply to make me a clean breast about the crockery."

About this time George Eliot was very much out of health: indeed, both she and Lewes repeatedly speak of themselves as "two nervous, dyspeptic creatures, two ailing, susceptible bodies," to whom slight inconveniences are injurious and upsetting. Although it was hot summer weather, Mrs. Lewes suffered much from cold, sitting always with artificial heat to her feet. One broiling day in August, after she had left Brookbank, and taken another place in the neighborhood, an acquaintance happening to call on her, found her sitting in the garden writing, as was her wont, her head merely shaded by a deodora, on the lawn. Being expostulated with by her visitor for her imprudence in exposing herself to the full blaze of the midday sun, she replied, "Oh, I like it! To-day is the first time I have felt warm this summer."

They led a most secluded life, George Eliot being at this time engaged with the continuation of 'Middlemarch;' and Lewes, alluding to their solitary habits, writes at this date: "Work goes on smoothly away from all friendly interruptions. Lord Houghton says that it is incomprehensible how we can live in such Simeon Stylites fashion, as we often do, all alone — but the fact is we never *are* alone when alone. And I sometimes marvel how it is I have contrived to get through so much work living in London. It 's true I 'm a London child." Occasionally, however, they would go and see Tennyson, whose house is only three miles from Shottermill, but the road being all uphill made the ride a little tedious and uncomfortable, especially to George Eliot who had not got over her old nervousness. The man who used to drive them on these occasions was so much struck by this that he told the lady who has recorded these details in the *Century Magazine:* "Withal her being such a mighty clever body, she were very nervous in a carriage — allays wanted to go on a smooth road, and seemed dreadful feared of being thrown out." On one of these occasional meetings with Tennyson, the poet got involved in a conversation with the novelist concerning evolu-

tion and such weighty questions. They had been walking together in close argument, and as the Poet-Laureate bade George Eliot farewell, he called to her, already making her way down the hill, "Well, good-by, you and your molecules!" And she, looking back, said in her deep low voice (which always got lower when she was at all roused), "I am quite content with my molecules."

The country all around Shottermill with its breezy uplands, its pine-clad hills, its undulating tracts of land purpled with heath in the autumn, became more and more endeared to George Eliot, who, indeed, liked it better than any scenery in England. Here she could enjoy to the full that "sense of standing on a round world," which, she writes to Mrs. Gilchrist who had used the phrase, "was precisely what she most cared for amongst out-of-door delights." Some years afterwards we find her and Mr. Lewes permanently taking a house not far off, at Witley in Surrey, which has the same kind of beautiful open scenery. Writing from her town residence about it to her old friend Mrs. Bray, George Eliot says: "We, too, are thinking of a new settling down, for we have bought a house in Surrey about four miles from Godalming on a gravelly hill among the pine-trees, but with neighbors to give us a sense of security. Our present idea is that we shall part with this house and give up London except for occasional visits. We shall be on the same line of railway with some good friends at Weybridge and Guildford."

CHAPTER XIV.

DANIEL DERONDA.

'Daniel Deronda,' which appeared five years after 'Middlemarch,' occupies a place apart among George Eliot's novels. In the spirit which animates it, it has perhaps the closest affinity with 'The Spanish Gypsy.' Speaking of this work to a young friend of Jewish extraction (in whose career George Eliot felt keen interest), she expressed surprise at the

amazement which her choice of a subject had created. "I wrote about the Jews," she remarked, "because I consider them a fine old race who have done great things for humanity. I feel the same admiration for them as I do for the Florentines. Only lately I have heard to my great satisfaction that an influential member of the Jewish community is going to start an emigration to Palestine. You will also be glad to learn that Helmholtz is a Jew."

These observations are valuable as affording a key to the leading motive of 'Daniel Deronda.' Mordecai's ardent desire to found a new national state in Palestine is not simply the author's dramatic realization of the feeling of an enthusiast, but expresses her own very definite sentiments on the subject. The Jewish apostle is, in fact, more or less the mouthpiece of George Eliot's own opinions on Judaism. For so great a master in the art of creating character, this type of the loftiest kind of man is curiously unreal. Mordecai delivers himself of the most eloquent and exalted views and sentiments, yet his own personality remains so vague and nebulous that it has no power of kindling the imagination. Mordecai is meant for a Jewish Mazzini. Within his consciousness he harbors the future of a people. He feels himself destined to become the savior of his race; yet he does not convince us of his greatness. He convinces us no more than he does the mixed company at the "Hand and Banner," which listens with pitying incredulity to his passionate harangues. Nevertheless the first and final test of the religious teacher or of the social reformer is the magnetic force with which his own intense beliefs become binding on the consciences of others, if only of a few. It is true Mordecai secures one disciple — the man destined to translate his thought into action, Daniel Deronda, as shadowy, as puppet-like, as lifeless as Ezra Mordecai Cohen himself. These two men, of whom the one is the spiritual leader and the other the hero destined to realize his aspirations, are probably the two most unsuccessful of George Eliot's vast gallery of characters. They are the representatives of an idea, but the idea has never been made flesh. A succinct expression of it may be gathered from the following passage:

"Which among the chief of the Gentile nations has not an ignorant multitude? They scorn our people's ignorant observance; but the most accursed ignorance is that which has no observance — sunk to the cunning greed of the fox, to which all law is no more than a trap or the cry of the worrying hound. There is a degradation deep down below the memory that has withered into superstition. For the multitude of the ignorant on three continents who observe our rites and make the confession of the Divine Unity the Lord of Judaism is not dead. Revive the organic centre: let the unity of Israel which has made the growth and form of its religion be an outward reality. Looking towards a land and a polity, our dispersed people in all the ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which has a voice among the peoples of the East and the West; which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race, so that it may be, as of old, a medium of transmission and understanding. Let that come to pass, and the living warmth will spread to the weak extremities of Israel, and superstition will vanish, not in the lawlessness of the renegade, but in the illumination of great facts which widen feeling, and make all knowledge alive as the young offspring of beloved memories."

This notion that the Jews should return to Palestine in a body, and once more constitute themselves into a distinct nation, is curiously repugnant to modern feelings. As repugnant as that other doctrine, which is also implied in the book, that Jewish separateness should be still further insured by strictly adhering to their own race in marriage — at least Mirah, the most faultless of George Eliot's heroines, whose character expresses the noblest side of Judaism, "is a Jewess who will not accept any one but a Jew."

Mirah Lapidoth and the Princess Halm-Eberstein, Deronda's mother, are drawn with the obvious purpose of contrasting two types of Jewish women. Whereas the latter, strictly brought up in the belief and most minute observances of her Hebrew father, breaks away from the "bondage of having been born a Jew," from which she wishes to relieve her son by parting from him in infancy, Mirah, brought up in disregard, "even in dislike of her Jewish origin," clings with inviolable

tenacity to the memory of that origin and to the fellowship of her people. The author leaves one in little doubt as to which side her own sympathies incline towards. She is not so much the artist here, impartially portraying different kinds of characters, as the special pleader proclaiming that one set of motives are righteous, just, and praiseworthy, as well as that the others are mischievous and reprehensible.

This seems carrying the principle of nationality to an extreme, if not pernicious length. If there were never any breaking up of old forms of society, any fresh blending of nationalities and races, we should soon reduce Europe to another China. This unwavering faithfulness to the traditions of the past may become a curse to the living. A rigidity as unnatural as it is dangerous would be the result of too tenacious a clinging to inherited memories. For if this doctrine were strictly carried out, such a country as America, where there is a slow amalgamation of many allied and even heterogeneous races into a new nation, would practically become impossible. Indeed, George Eliot does not absolutely hold these views. She considers them necessary at present in order to act as a drag to the too rapid transformations of society. In the most interesting paper of 'Theophrastus Such,' that called 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' she remarks: "The tendency of things is towards quicker or slower fusion of races. It is impossible to arrest this tendency; all we can do is to moderate its course so as to hinder it from degrading the moral status of societies by a too rapid effacement of those national traditions and customs which are the language of the national genius — the deep suckers of healthy sentiment. Such moderating and guidance of inevitable movement is worthy of all effort."

Considering that George Eliot was convinced of this modern tendency towards fusion, it is all the more singular that she should, in 'Daniel Deronda,' have laid such stress on the reconstruction, after the lapse of centuries, of a Jewish state; singular, when one considers that many of the most eminent Jews, so far from aspiring towards such an event, hardly seem to have contemplated it as a desirable or possible prospect. The sympathies of Spinoza, the Mendelssohns,

Rahel, Meyerbeer, Heine, and many others, are not distinctively Jewish but humanitarian. And the grandest, as well as truest thing that has been uttered about them is that saying of Heine's: "The country of the Jews is the ideal, is God."

Indeed, to have a true conception of Jewish nature and character, of its brilliant lights and deep shadows, of its pathos, depth, sublimity, degradation, and wit; of its infinite resource and boundless capacity for suffering — one must go to Heine and not to 'Daniel Deronda.' In 'Jehuda-ben-Halevy' Heine expresses the love and longing of a Jewish heart for Jerusalem in accents of such piercing intensity that compared with it "Mordecai's" fervid desire fades into mere abstract rhetoric.

Nature and experience were the principal sources of George Eliot's inspiration. And though she knew a great deal about the Jews, her experience had not become sufficiently incorporated with her consciousness. Otherwise, instead of portraying such tame models of perfection as Deronda and Mirah, she would have so mixed her colors as to give us that subtle involvement of motive and tendency — as of cross-currents in the sea — which we find in the characters of nature's making and in her own finest creations, such as Maggie, Silas Marner, Dorothea Casaubon, and others.

In turning to the English portion of the story there is at once greater play of spontaneity in the people depicted. Grandcourt, Gascoigne, Rex, Mrs. Davilow, Sir Hugh Mallinger, and especially Gwendolen, show all the old cunning in the psychological rendering of human nature. Curiously enough, this novel consists of two perfectly distinct narratives; the only point of junction being Daniel Deronda himself, who, as a Jew by birth and an English gentleman by education, stands related to both sets of circumstances. The influence he exerts on the spiritual development of Gwendolen seems indeed the true *motif* of the story. Otherwise there is no intrinsic connection between the group of people clustering round Mordecai, and that of which Gwendolen is the centre: unless it be that the author wished to show the greater intensity of aim and higher moral worth of the

Jews as contrasted with these purposeless, worldly, unideal Christians of the nineteenth century.

Compared with the immaculate Mirah, Gwendolen Harleth is a very naughty, spoiled, imperfect specimen of maidenhood. But she has life in her; and one speculates as to what she will say and do next, as if she were a person among one's acquaintances. On that account most readers of 'Daniel Deronda' find their interest engrossed by the fate of Gwendolen, and the conjugal relations between her and Grandcourt. This is so much the case, that one suspects her to have been the first idea of the story. She is at any rate its most attractive feature. In Gwendolen, George Eliot once remarked, she had wished to draw a girl of the period. Fascinating, accomplished, of siren-like beauty, she has every outward grace combined with a singular inward vacuity. The deeper aspects of life are undreamed of in her philosophy. Her religion consists in a vague awe of the unknown and invisible, and her ambition in the acquisition of rank, wealth, and personal distinction. She is selfish, vain, frivolous, worldly, domineering, yet not without sudden impulses of generosity, and jets of affection. Something there is in her of Undine before she had a soul — something of a gay, vivacious, unfeeling sprite, who recks nothing of human love or of human misery, but looks down with utter indifference on the poor humdrum mortals around her, whom she inspires at once with fear and fondness: something, also, of the "princess in exile, who in time of famine was to have her breakfast-roll made of the finest bolted flour from the seven thin ears of wheat, and in a general decampment was to have her silver fork kept out of the baggage."

How this bewitching creature, whose "iridescence of character" makes her a psychological problem, is gradually brought to accept Henleigh Grandcourt, in spite of the promise she has given to Lydia Glasher (his discarded victim), and her own fleeting presentiments, is described with an analytical subtlety unsurpassed in George Eliot's works. So, indeed, is the whole episode of the married life of Grandcourt. This territorial magnate, who possesses every worldly advantage that Gwendolen desired, is worthy, as a study of character,

to be placed beside that of Casaubon himself. Gwendolen's girlish type of egoism, which loves to be the centre of admiration, here meets with that far other deadlier form of an "exorbitant egoism," conspicuous for its intense obstinacy and tenacity of rule, "in proportion as the varied susceptibilities of younger years are stripped away." This cold, negative nature lies with a kind of withering blight on the susceptible Gwendolen. Roused from the complacent dreams of girlhood by the realities of her married life, shrinking in helpless repulsion from the husband whom she meant to manage, and who holds her as in a vice, the unhappy woman has nothing to cling to in this terrible inward collapse of her happiness, but the man, who, from the first moment when his eye arrests hers at the gaming table at Leubronn, becomes, as it were, a conscience visibly incarnate to her. This incident, which is told in the first chapter of the novel, recalls a sketch by Dante Rossetti, where Mary Magdalene, in the flush of joyous life, is held by the Saviour's gaze, and in a sudden revulsion from her old life, breaks away from companions that would fain hold her back, with a passionate movement towards the Man of Sorrow. This impressive conception may have unconsciously suggested a somewhat similar situation to the novelist, for that George Eliot was acquainted with this drawing is shown by the following letter addressed in 1870 to Dante Rossetti:

"I have had time now to dwell on the photographs. I am especially grateful to you for giving me the head marked June 1861: it is exquisite. But I am glad to possess every one of them. The subject of the Magdalene rises in interest for me, the more I look at it. I hope you will keep in the picture an equally passionate type for her. Perhaps you will indulge me with a little talk about the modifications you intend to introduce."

The relation of Deronda to Gwendolen is of a Christlike nature. He is her only moral hold in the fearful temptations that assail her now and again under the intolerable irritations of her married life, temptations which grow more urgent when Grandcourt leads his wife captive, after his fashion, in a yacht on the Mediterranean. For "the intensest form of

hatred is that rooted in fear, which compels to silence, and drives vehemence into a constructive vindictiveness, an imaginary annihilation of the detested object, something like the hidden rites of vengeance, with which the persecuted have made a dark vent for their rage, and soothed their suffering into numbness. Such hidden rites went on in the secrecy of Gwendolen's mind, but not with soothing effect — rather with the effect of a struggling terror. Side by side with dread of her husband had grown the self-dread which urged her to flee from the pursuing images wrought by her pent-up impulse."

The evil wish at last finds fulfilment, the murderous thought is outwardly realized. And though death is not eventually the result of the criminal desire, it yet seems to the unhappy wife as if it had a determining power in bringing about the catastrophe. But it is precisely this remorse which is the redeeming quality of her nature, and awakens a new life within her. In this quickening of the moral consciousness through guilt we are reminded, although in a different manner, of a similar process, full of pregnant suggestions, described in Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'Transformation.' It will be remembered that Donatello leads a purely instinctive, that is to say, animal, existence, till the commission of a crime awakens the dormant conscience, and a soul is born in the throes of anguish and remorse.

'In Daniel Deronda' there is an entire absence of that rich, genial humor which seemed spontaneously to bubble up and overflow her earlier works. Whether George Eliot's conception of the Jews as a peculiarly serious race had any share in bringing about that result, it is difficult to say. At any rate, in one of her essays she remarks that, "The history and literature of the ancient Hebrews gives the idea of a people who went about their business and pleasure as gravely as a society of beavers." Certainly Mordecai, Deronda, and Mirah are preternaturally solemn; even the Cohen family are not presented with any of those comic touches one would have looked for in this great humorist; only in the boy Jacob there are gleams of drollery such as in this description of him by Hans Meyrick: "He treats me with the easiest familiarity,

and seems in general to look at me as a second-hand Christian commodity, likely to come down in price; remarking on my disadvantages with a frankness which seems to imply some thoughts of future purchase. It is pretty, though, to see the change in him if Mirah happens to come in. He turns child suddenly — his age usually strikes one as being like the Israelitish garments in the desert, perhaps near forty, yet with an air of recent production."

A certain subdued vein of humor is not entirely absent from the portraiture of the Meyrick family, a delightful group, who "had their little oddities, streaks of eccentricity from the mother's blood as well as the father's, their minds being like mediæval houses with unexpected recesses and openings from this into that, flights of steps, and sudden outlooks. But on the whole, instead of the old humor, we find in 'Daniel Deronda' a polished irony and epigrammatic sarcasm, which were afterwards still more fully developed in the 'Impressions of Theophrastus Such.'

Soon after the publication of this novel, we find the following allusion to it in one of George Eliot's letters to Mrs. Bray: "I don't know what you refer to in the *Jewish World*. Perhaps the report of Dr. Hermann Adler's lecture on 'Deronda' to the Jewish working-men, given in the *Times*. Probably the Dr. Adler whom you saw is Dr. Hermann's father, still living as Chief Rabbi. I have had some delightful communications from Jews and Jewesses, both at home and abroad. Part of the Club scene in 'D. D.,' is flying about in the Hebrew tongue through the various Hebrew newspapers, which have been copying the 'Maga,' in which the translation was first sent to me three months ago. The Jews naturally are not indifferent to themselves."

This Club scene gave rise at the time to quite a controversy. It could not fail to be identified with that other club of philosophers out at elbows so vividly described by G. H. Lewes in the *Fortnightly Review* of 1866. Nor was it possible not to detect an affinity between the Jew Cohen, the poor consumptive journeyman watchmaker, with his weak voice and his great calm intellect, and Ezra Mordecai Cohen, in precisely similar conditions; the difference being that the one is pene-

trated by the philosophical idea of Spinozism, and the other by the political idea of reconstituting a Jewish State in Palestine. This difference of mental bias, no doubt, forms a contrast between the two characters, without, however, invalidating the surmise that the fictitious enthusiast may have been originally suggested by the noble figure of the living Jew. Be that as it may, Lewes often took the opportunity in conversation of "pointing out that no such resemblance existed, Cohen being a keen dialectician and a highly impressive man, but without any specifically Jewish enthusiasm."

When she undertook to write about the Jews, George Eliot was deeply versed in Hebrew literature, ancient and modern. She had taught herself Hebrew when translating the *Leben Jesu*, and this knowledge now stood her in good stead. She was also familiar with the splendid utterances of Jehuda-ben-Halevy; with the visionary speculations of the Cabbalists, and with the brilliant Jewish writers of the Hispano-Arabic epoch. She had read portions of the Talmud, and remarked one day in conversation that Spinoza had really got something from the Cabbala. On her friend humbly suggesting that by ordinary accounts it appeared to be awful nonsense, she said "that it nevertheless contained fine ideas, like Plato and the Old Testament, which, however, people took in the lump, being accustomed to them."

CHAPTER XV.

LAST YEARS.

'Daniel Deronda' is the last great imaginative work with which George Eliot was destined to enrich the world. It came out in small volumes, the appearance of each fresh number being hailed as a literary event. In allusion to an author's feeling on the conclusion of a weighty task, George Eliot remarks in one of her letters: "As to the great novel which remains to be written, I must tell you that I never believe in future books. . . . Always after finishing a book I have a period of despair that I can never again produce any-

thing worth giving to the world. The responsibility of the writer grows heavier and heavier — does it not? — as the world grows older, and the voices of the dead more numerous. It is difficult to believe, until the germ of some new work grows into imperious activity within one, that it is possible to make a really needed contribution to the poetry of the world — I mean possible to one's self to do it."

This singular diffidence, arising from a sense of the tremendous responsibility which her position entailed, was one of the most noticeable characteristics of this great woman, and struck every one who came in contact with her. Her conscientiousness made her even painfully anxious to enter sympathetically into the needs of every person who approached her, so as to make her speech a permanently fruitful influence in her hearer's life. Such an interview, for example, as that between Goethe and Heine — where the younger poet, after thinking all the way what fine things to say to Goethe, was so disconcerted by the awe-inspiring presence of the master, that he could find nothing better to say than that the plums on the road-side between Jena and Weimar were remarkably good — would have been impossible with one so eager always to give of her best.

This deep seriousness of nature made her Sunday afternoon receptions, which became more and more fashionable as time went on, something of a tax to one who preferred the intimate converse of a few to that more superficially brilliant talk which a promiscuous gathering brings with it. Among the distinguished visitors to be met more or less frequently at the Priory may be mentioned Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Professor Beesly, Dr. and Mrs. Congreve, Madame Bodichon, Lord Houghton, M. Tourguénief, Mr. Ralston, Sir Theodore and Lady Martin (better known as Helen Faucit), Mr. Burton of the National Gallery, Mr. George Howard and his wife, Mr. C. G. Leland, Mr. Moncure Conway, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Dr. Hueffer, Mr. and Mrs. Buxton Forman, Mr. F. Myers, Mr. Sully, Mr. Du Maurier, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Pattison, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford, Lady Castletown and her daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Burne Jones, Mr. John Everett Millais, Mr. Robert Browning, and Mr. Tennyson.

Persons of celebrity were not the only ones, however, that were made welcome at the Priory. The liveliest sympathy was shown by both host and hostess in many young people as yet struggling in obscurity, but in whom they delighted to recognize the promise of some future excellence. If a young man were pursuing some original scientific inquiry, or striking out a new vein of speculation, in all London there was none likely to enter with such zest into his ideas as G. H. Lewes. His generous appreciation of intellectual gifts is well shown in the following lines to Professor W. K. Clifford:

"Few things have given us more pleasure than the intimation in your note that you had a *fiancée*. May she be the central happiness and motive force of your career, and, by satisfying the affections, leave your *rare* intellect free to work out its glorious destiny. For, if you don't become a glory to your age and time, it will be a sin and a shame. Nature does n't often send forth such gifted sons, and when she does, Society usually cripples them. Nothing but marriage — a happy marriage — has seemed to Mrs. Lewes and myself wanting to your future."

On the Sunday afternoon receptions just mentioned, G. H. Lewes acted, so to speak, as a social cement. His vivacity, his ready tact, the fascination of his manners, diffused that general sense of ease and *abandon* so requisite to foster an harmonious flow of conversation. He was inimitable as a *raconteur*, and Thackeray, Trollope, and Arthur Helps were fond of quoting some of the stories which he would dramatize in the telling. One of the images which, on these occasions, recurs oftenest to George Eliot's friends, is that of the frail-looking woman who would sit with her chair drawn close to the fire, and whose winning womanliness of bearing and manners struck every one who had the privilege of an introduction to her. Her long, pale face, with its strongly marked features, was less rugged in the mature prime of life than in youth, the inner meanings of her nature having worked themselves more and more to the surface, the mouth, with its benignant suavity of expression, especially softening the too prominent under-lip and massive jaw. Her abundant hair, untinged with gray, whose smooth bands made a kind of frame to the

face, was covered by a lace or muslin cap, with lappets of rich point or Valenciennes lace fastened under her chin. Her gray-blue eyes, under noticeable eyelashes, expressed the same acute sensitiveness as her long, thin, beautifully shaped hands. She had a pleasant laugh and smile, her voice being low, distinct, and intensely sympathetic in quality: it was contralto in singing, but she seldom sang or played before more than one or two friends. Though her conversation was perfectly easy, each sentence was as finished, as perfectly formed, as the style of her published works. Indeed, she laid great stress on the value of correct speaking and clearness of enunciation; and in 'Theophrastus Such' she laments "the general ambition to speak every language except our mother English, which persons 'of style' are not ashamed of corrupting with slang, false foreign equivalents, and a pronunciation that crushes out all color from the vowels, and jams them between jostling consonants."

Besides M. D'Albert's Genevese portrait of George Eliot, we have a drawing by Mr. Burton, and another by Mr. Lawrence, the latter taken soon after the publication of 'Adam Bede.' In criticising the latter likeness, a keen observer of human nature remarked that it conveyed no indication of the infinite depth of her observant eye, nor of that cold, subtle, and unconscious cruelty of expression which might occasionally be detected there. George Eliot had an unconquerable aversion to her likeness being taken: once, however, in 1860, she was photographed for the sake of her "dear sisters" at Rosehill. But she seems to have repented of this weakness, for, after the lapse of years, she writes: "Mr. Lewes has just come to me after reading your letter, and says, 'For God's sake tell her not to have the photograph reproduced!' and I had nearly forgotten to say that the fading is what I desired. I should not like this image to be perpetuated. It needs the friendly eyes that regret to see it fade, and must not be recalled into emphatic black and white for indifferent gazers. Pray let it vanish."

Those who knew George Eliot were even more struck by the force of her entire personality than by her writings. Sympathetic, witty, or learned in turn, her conversation

deeply impressed her hearers, being enriched by such felicities of expression as: "The best lesson of tolerance we have to learn is to tolerate intolerance." In answer to a friend's surprise that a clever man should allow himself to be contradicted by a stupid one, without dropping down on him, she remarked: "He is very liable to drop down as a baked apple would." And of a very plain acquaintance she said: "He has the most dreadful kind of ugliness one can be afflicted with, because it takes on the semblance of beauty."

Poetry, music, and art naturally absorbed much attention at the Priory. Here Mr. Tennyson has been known to read 'Maud' aloud to his friends: Mr. Browning expatiated on the most recondite metrical rules: and Rossetti sent presents of poems and photographs. In the following unpublished letters George Eliot thanks the latter for his valued gifts — "We returned only the night before last from a two months' journey to the Continent, and among the parcels awaiting me I found your generous gift. I am very grateful to you both as giver and poet.

"In cutting the leaves, while my head is still swimming from the journey, I have not resisted the temptation to read many things as they ought not to be read — hurriedly. But even in this way I have received a stronger impression than any fresh poems have for a long while given me, that to read once is a reason for reading again. The sonnets towards 'The House of Life' attract me peculiarly. I feel about them as I do about a new cahier of music which I have been 'trying' here and there with the delightful conviction that I have a great deal to become acquainted with and to like better and better." And again, in acknowledgment of some photographs: "The 'Hamlet' seems to me perfectly intelligible, and altogether admirable in conception, except in the type of the man's head. I feel sure that 'Hamlet' had a square anterior lobe.

"Mr. Lewes says, this conception of yours makes him long to be an actor who has 'Hamlet' for one of his parts, that he might carry out this scene according to your idea.

"One is always liable to mistake prejudices for sufficient inductions, about types of head and face, as well as about all

other things. I have some impressions — perhaps only prejudices dependent on the narrowness of my experience — about forms of eyebrow and their relation to passionate expression. It is possible that such a supposed relation has a real anatomical basis. But in many particulars facial expression is like the expression of hand-writing: the relations are too subtle and intricate to be detected, and only shallowness is confident."

George Eliot read but little contemporary fiction, being usually absorbed in the study of some particular subject. "For my own spiritual good I need all other sort of reading," she says, "more than I need fiction. I know nothing of contemporary English novelists with the exception of ——, and a few of ——'s works. My constant groan is that I must leave so much of the greatest writing which the centuries have sifted for me unread for want of time." For the same reason, on being recommended by a literary friend to read Walt Whitman, she hesitated on the ground of his not containing anything spiritually needful for her, but, having been induced to take him up, she changed her opinion and admitted that he *did* contain what was "good for her soul." As to lighter reading, she was fond of books of travel, pronouncing "'The Voyage of the Challenger' a splendid book." Among foreign novelists she was very partial to Henry Gréville, and speaks of 'Les Koumiassine' as a pleasant story.

Persons who were privileged enough to be admitted to the intimacy of George Eliot and Mr. Lewes could not fail to be impressed by the immense admiration which they had for one another. Lewes's tenderness, always on the watch lest the great writer, with her delicately poised health, should over-exert herself, had something of doglike fidelity. On the other hand, in spite of George Eliot's habitually retiring manner, if any one ever engaged on the opposite side of an argument to that maintained by the brilliant *savant*, in taking his part, she usually had the best of it, although in the most gentle and feminine way.

Although there was entire oneness of feeling between them, there was no unanimity of opinion. George Eliot had the

highest regard for Lewes's opinions, but held to her own. One of the chief subjects of difference consisted in their attitude towards Christianity: whereas he was its uncompromising opponent, she had the greatest sympathy with its various manifestations from Roman Catholic asceticism to Evangelical austerity and Methodist fervor. Her reverence for every form of worship in which mankind has more or less consciously embodied its sense of the mystery of all "this unintelligible world" increased with the years. She was deeply penetrated by that tendency of the Positivist spirit which recognizes the beneficial element in every form of religion, and sees the close, nay indissoluble, connection between the faith of former generations and the ideal of our own. She herself found ample scope for the needs and aspirations of her spiritual nature in the religion of humanity. As has already been repeatedly pointed out, there runs through all her works the same persistent teaching of "the Infinite Nature of Duty." And with Comte she refers "the obligations of duty, as well as all sentiments of devotion, to a concrete object, at once ideal and real; the Human Race, conceived as a continuous whole, including the past, the present, and the future."

Though George Eliot drew many of her ideas of moral cultivation from the doctrines of Comte's *Philosophie Positive*, she was not a Positivist in the strict sense of the word. Her mind was far too creative by nature to give an unqualified adhesion to such a system as Comte's. Indeed, her devotion to the idea of mankind, conceived as a collective whole, is not so much characteristic of Positivists as of the greatest modern minds, minds such as Lessing, Bentham, Shelley, Mill, Mazzini, and Victor Hugo. Inasmuch as Comte co-ordinated these ideas into a consistent doctrine, George Eliot found herself greatly attracted to his system; and Mr. Beesly, after an acquaintance of eighteen years, considered himself justified in stating that her powerful intellect had accepted the teaching of Auguste Comte, and that she looked forward to the reorganization of belief on the lines which he had laid down. Still her adherence, like that of G. H. Lewes, was only partial, and applied mainly to his philosophy, and not to his scheme

of social policy. She went farther than the latter, however, in her concurrence. For Mr. Lewes, speaking of the *Politique Positive* in his 'History of Philosophy,' admits that his antagonistic attitude had been considerably modified on learning from the remark of one very dear to him, "to regard it as an Utopia, presenting hypotheses rather than doctrines — suggestions for future inquiries rather than dogmas for adepts."

On the whole, although George Eliot did not agree with Comte's later theories concerning the reconstruction of society, she regarded them with sympathy "as the efforts of an individual to anticipate the work of future generations." This sympathy with the general Positivist movement she showed by subscribing regularly to Positivist objects, especially to the fund of the Central Organization presided over by M. Laffitte, but she invariably refused all membership with the Positivist community. In conversation with an old and valued friend, she also repeatedly expressed her objection to much in Comte's later speculations, saying on one occasion, "I cannot submit my intellect or my soul to the guidance of Comte." The fact is that, although George Eliot was greatly influenced by the leading Positivist ideas, her mind was too original not to work out her own individual conception of life.

What this conception is has been already indicated, so far as space would permit, in the discussion of her successive works. Perhaps in the course of time her moralizing analytical tendency encroached too much on the purely artistic faculty. Her eminently dramatic genius — which enabled her to realize characters the most varied and opposite in type, somewhat in the manner of Shakespeare — became hampered by theories and abstract views of life. This was especially shown in her latest work 'The Impressions of Theophrastus Such,' a series of essays chiefly satirizing the weaknesses and vanities of the literary class. In these unattractive "impressions" the wit is often labored, and does not play "beneficently round the changing facets of egotism, absurdity, and vice, as the sunshine over the rippling sea or the dewy meadows." Its cutting irony and incisive ridicule are no longer tempered by the

humorous laugh, but have the corrosive quality of some acrid chemical substance.

One of the papers, however, that entitled 'Debasing the Moral Currency,' expresses a strongly marked characteristic of George Eliot's mind. It is a pithy protest against the tendency of the present generation to turn the grandest deeds and noblest works of art into food for laughter. For she hated nothing so much as mockery and ridicule of what other people reverenced, often remarking that those who considered themselves freest from superstitious fancies were the most intolerant. She carried this feeling to such a pitch that she even disliked a book like 'Alice in Wonderland' because it laughed at the things which children had had a kind of belief in. In censuring this vicious habit of burlesquing the things that ought to be regarded with awe and admiration, she remarks, "Let a greedy buffoonery debase all historic beauty, majesty, and pathos, and the more you heap up the desecrated symbols, the greater will be the lack of the ennobling emotions which subdue the tyranny of suffering, and make ambition one with virtue."

'Looking Backward' is the only paper in 'Theophrastus Such' quite free from cynicism. It contains, under a slightly veiled form, pathetically tender reminiscences of her own early life. This volume, not published till May 1879, was written before the incalculable loss which befell George Eliot in the autumn of the preceding year.

After spending the summer of 1878 in the pleasant retirement of Witley, Lewes and George Eliot returned to London. A severe cold taken by Lewes proved the forerunner of a serious disorder, and, after a short illness, this bright, many-sided, indefatigable thinker passed away in his sixty-second year. He had frequently said to his friends that the most desirable end of a well-spent life was a painless death; and although his own could not be called painless, his sufferings were at least of short duration. Concerning the suffering and anguish of her who was left behind to mourn him, one may most fitly say, in her own words, that "for the first sharp pangs there is no comfort — whatever goodness may surround us, darkness and silence still hang about our pain." In her

case, also, the "clinging companionship with the dead" was gradually linked with her living affections, and she found alleviation for her sorrow in resuming those habits of continuous mental occupation which had become second nature with her. In a letter addressed to a friend, who, only a few short months afterwards, suffered a like heavy bereavement, there breathes the spirit in which George Eliot bore her own sorrow: "I understand it all. . . . There is but one refuge — the having much to do. You have the mother's duties. Not that these can yet make your life other than a burden to be patiently borne. Nothing can, except the gradual adaptation of your soul to the new conditions. . . . It is among my most cherished memories that I knew your husband, and from the first delighted in him. . . . All blessing — and even the sorrow that is a form of love has a heart of blessing — is tenderly wished for you."

On seeing this lady for the first time after their mutual loss, George Eliot asked her eagerly: "Do the children help? Does it make any difference?" Some help there was for the widowed heart of this sorrowing woman in throwing herself, with all her energies, into the work which Lewes had left unfinished at his death, and preparing it for publication, with the help of an expert. Another subject which occupied her thoughts at this time was the foundation of the "George Henry Lewes Studentship," in order to commemorate the name of one who had done so much to distinguish himself in the varied fields of literature, science, and philosophy. The value of the studentship is slightly under 200*l.* a year. It is worth noticing that persons of both sexes are received as candidates. The object of the endowment is to encourage the prosecution of original research in physiology, a science to whose study Lewes had devoted himself most assiduously for many years. Writing of this matter to a young lady, one of the Girton students, George Eliot says: "I know . . . will be glad to hear also that both in England and Germany the type, or scheme, on which the studentship is arranged has been regarded with satisfaction, as likely to be a useful model."

Amid such preoccupations, and the preparation of 'Theophrastus Such' for the press, the months passed on, and

George Eliot was beginning to see her friends again, when one day she not only took the world, but her intimate circle by surprise, by her marriage with Mr. John Walter Cross, on the 6th of May, 1880. The acquaintance with this gentleman, dating from the year 1867, had long ago grown into the warmest friendship, and his boundless devotion to the great woman whose society was to him as his daily bread, no doubt induced her to take a step which could not fail to startle even those who loved her the most. But George Eliot's was a nature that needed some one especially to love. And though that precious companionship, at once stimulating and sympathetic, which she had so long enjoyed, was taken from her, she could still find comfort during the remainder of her life in the love, the appreciation, and the tender care which were proffered to her by Mr. Cross. Unfortunately her life was not destined to be prolonged.

Although seeming fairly well at this date, George Eliot's health, always delicate, had probably received a shock, from which it never recovered. Only six months before her marriage three eminent medical men were attending her for a painful disease. However, there seemed still a prospect of happiness for her when she and Mr. Cross went for a tour in Italy, settling, on their return, at her favorite country house at Witley. In the autumn they once more made their home in London, at Mr. Cross's town house at 4 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, and Mrs. Cross, who was again beginning to receive her friends, seemed, to all appearances, well and happy, with a prospect of domestic love and unimpaired mental activity stretching out before her. But it was not to be. On Friday, the 17th of December, George Eliot attended a representation of the 'Agamemnon,' in Greek, by Oxford undergraduates, and was so stirred by the grand words of her favorite Æschylus, that she was contemplating a fresh perusal of the Greek dramatists with her husband. On the following day she went to the Saturday popular concert, and on returning home played through some of the music she had been hearing. Her fatal cold was probably caught on that occasion, for, although she received her friends, according to custom, on the Sunday afternoon, she felt indisposed in the evening, and on the following

day an affection of the larynx necessitated medical advice. There seemed no cause for alarm at first, till on Wednesday it was unexpectedly discovered that inflammation had arisen in the heart, and that no hope of recovery remained. Before midnight of the 22nd of December, 1880, George Eliot, who died at precisely the same age as Lewes, had passed quietly and painlessly away; and on Christmas Eve the announcement of her death was received with general grief. She was buried by the side of George Henry Lewes, in the cemetery at Highgate.

George Eliot's career has been habitually described as uniform and uneventful. In reality nothing is more misleading. On the contrary, her life, from its rising to its setting, describes an astonishingly wide orbit. If one turns back in imagination from the little Staffordshire village whence her father sprang, to the simple rural surroundings of her own youth, and traces her history to the moment when a crowd of mourners, consisting of the most distinguished men and women in England, followed her to the grave, one cannot help realizing how truly eventful was the life of her who now joined in spirit the

> "Choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end in self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues."

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